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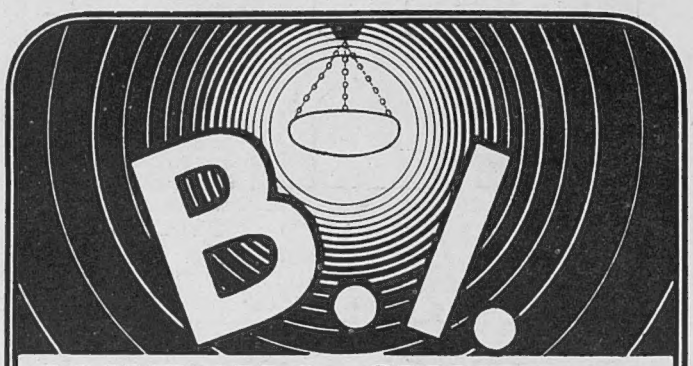

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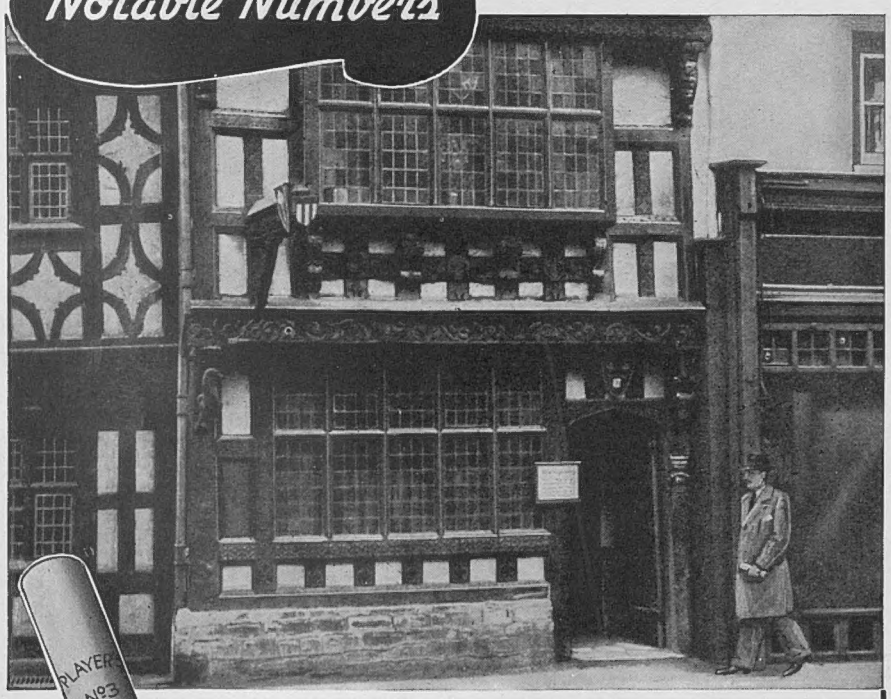

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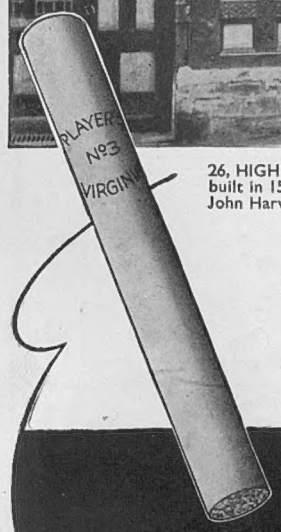

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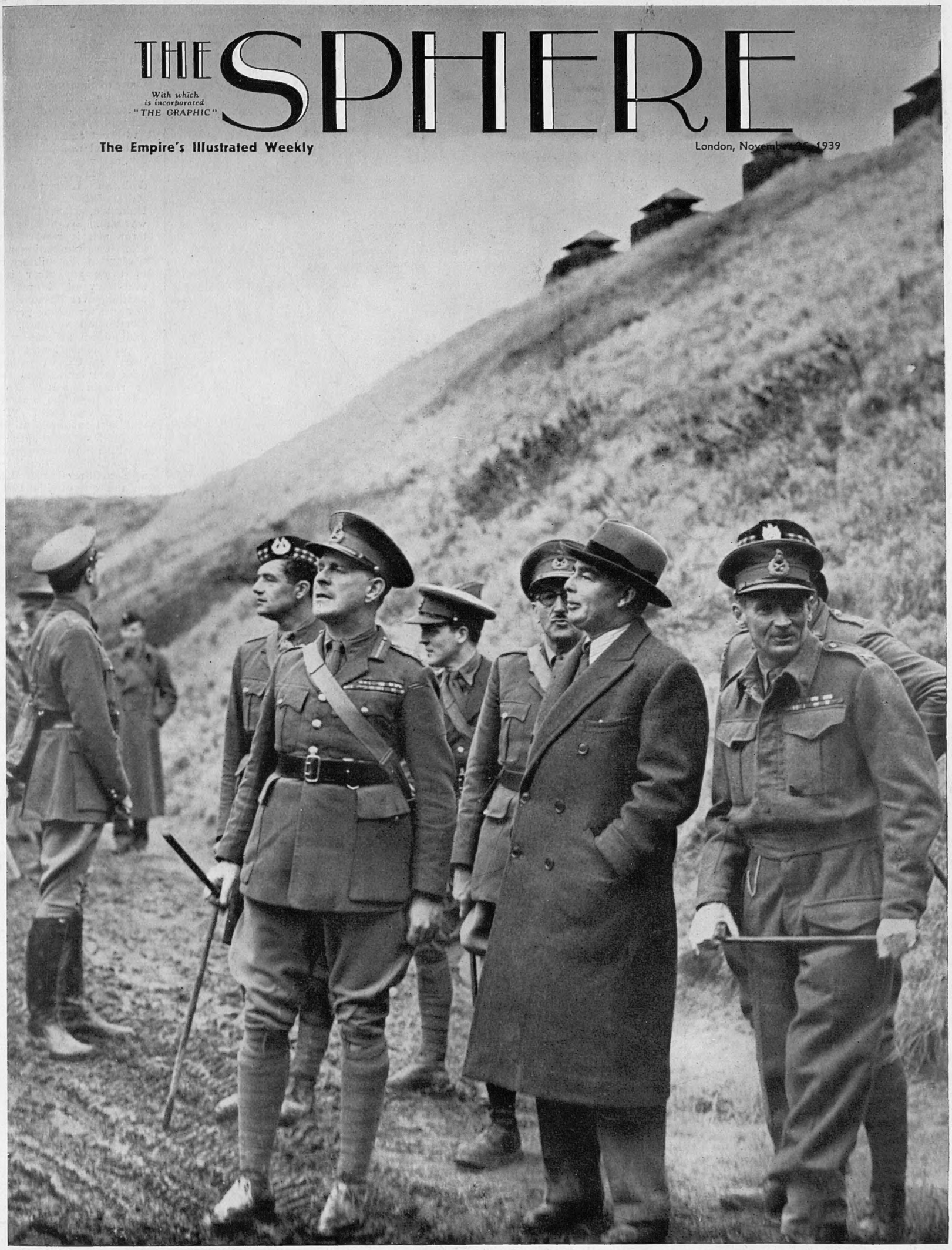

THE WAR MINISTER AT THE FRONT

Mr. L. Hore-Belisha, Secretary of State for War, Accompanied by the Commander-in-Chief During His Tour of the British Lines

The War Minister has just completed a visit of inspection to the zones occupied by the British Forces in France. Accompanied by Lord Gort, he visited several French divisions stationed near the British lines and made also a thorough inspection of pill-boxes, block-houses and tank traps. General Sir John Dill and Lieut.-General A. F. Brooke explained to him the functions of each of these. Mr. Hore-Belisha spoke highly of the efficiency of all that he saw during his visit. Above he is seen with General Lord Gort, the British Commander-in-Chief, and other officers (note the high-ranking officer on the right, attired in a Tommy's "battle-dress" uniform, with only his epaulettes to denote his rank)

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THE BOARD OF ADMIRALTY IN SESSION IN THE HISTORIC BOARD ROOM AT THE ADMIRALTY

In this specially-posed picture, taken during an actual session of the Board, are seen the following members. Reading round the table from the left are: Parliamentary and Financial Secretary, Mr. Geoffrey Shakespeare, M.P.; Assistant Chief of Naval Staff, Rear-Admiral H. M. Burrough, C.B.; Fifth Sea Lord, Vice-Admiral the Hon. Sir Alexander R. Ramsey, G.C.V.O., K.C.B., D.S.O.; Deputy-Chief of Naval Staff, Rear-Admiral T. S. V. Phillips, C.B.; First Sea Lord, Admiral of the Fleet Sir Dudley Pound, G.C.B., G.C.V.O.; Deputy-Secretary, Sir J. Sidney Barnes, K.B.E., C.B.; First Lord, Right Hon. Winston Churchill, C.H., M.P.; Secretary of the Admiralty, Sir Archibald Carter, K.C.B., K.C.I.E.; Second Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Charles Little, K.C.B.; Third Sea Lord and Controller, Rear-Admiral B. A. Fraser, C.B., O.B.E.; Fourth Sea Lord, Rear-Admiral G. S. Arbuthnot, C.B., D.S.O.; Civil Lord, Captain A. U. M. Hudson, M.P. The old building, of which the Board room is part, was erected in 1722-5 from plans by Thomas Ripley, to replace the first Admiralty building erected on the site in 1695. The ceiling was reconstructed in 1786 (when the First Lord's house was built); the staircase opposite was reconstructed at the same time. The pearwood carving over the fireplace was probably made for the 1695 building, and is the work of Grinling Gibbons or one of his school. It was transferred to the present room in 1725, and at one time was on the south wall (behind the First Lord's chair). It was put in the present position in 1847, when the room was renovated and pictures added. The nautical instruments represented in the carving are those in general use in the Navy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and some are the only contemporary facsimile models now in existence. They include the wind-dial, which is older than the room, and which was made between 1707 and 1714, probably with the carving removed from the former Admiralty building. The clock was made about 1697 for the former Admiralty. The table was made about 1786. The sea-pieces over the door probably came from the Navy Board office. The picture of William IV (who had been Lord High Admiral 1827-8) was added in 1847

A WAR

32-34, St. Bride Street, E.C.4
Wednesday, November 22, 1939

ULYSSES DERIDING POLYPHEMUS.—Mr. Churchill in his unofficial broadcast, "Ten Weeks of War," vastly enjoyed himself and amused the bulk of his audience (a very large one) in his inimitable way. Obviously, he was trying another insidious means of assassinating Hitler (having failed to blow him up after his parachute descent at Munich). He tried what he could do to kill him with a stroke of apoplexy. And every taunt was shaped to bring on apoplexy, and failing that, to bring on a German offensive. If the nature of his broadcast was not discussed and planned and approved in Paris during his recent visit, I will eat my hat. For nothing was more remarkable than the difference in tone and in degree of the British and the French replies to the Queen of Holland and the King of the Belgians; the first non-committal and restrained, the second expressing trenchantly very definite reparations and very far-reaching war aims. No doubt the Nazis will now begin the "separate peace with England" campaign. However it may have been at the beginning of September, it is clear enough to-day that the Jerry-bunglers of diplomacy had got the wrong sow by the ear when they sought to detach the French from the alliance against Nazi aggression and to make Britain Enemy No. 1 of German peace. *Il faut en finir (aussi vite que possible)* is first and foremost the slogan of France, and Mr. Churchill's taunts neither dismayed nor surprised M. Daladier and General Gamelin. They were made "according to plan." They were wittily and brilliantly made. I am not myself convinced that the method employed is fitting in a Minister of State of a great nation which still adheres to the great traditions of international relations. But the world is upside down, and it is necessary to show the brutish Nazis that windbag threats have not made our flesh creep nor diluted our crusading spirit.

EVOLUTION OF HATE.—How true it is that a vendetta of hate carried beyond the bounds of reason stultifies its object and becomes merely silly and boring in the eyes and minds of those who are invited to join in it or are destined to suffer under it. It is to that stage of absurdity that the Hitler-Goebbels-Ribbentrop campaign of hate against England has already come. In Germany it is like an onion in the hands of an untidy cook. It has permeated everything. The bread, the dessert, the ersatz coffee and the milk, all taste of it. Its smell taints the back stairs, the bedrooms, the nursery. It is hate run mad. It is more than a madman's obsession, more than a King Charles' head. If Hitler breaks his collar stud, it is England's insidious work. If Goebbels' bootlace goes, it is England's doing. We know how it strikes us at home. How about educated Germans? We have friends over there still; beloved governesses, intelligent professors and business men, cooks and housemaids who taught our own flighty maids the dignity of efficient housework. How do these people we know and like endure the indignity of being ruled and led to perdition by a bunch of nasty-minded, brutish, oafish, sadistic school-urchins? It must be the bitterest experience, the greatest humiliation, ever put upon a race. There is a limit to what advertisement can do. The ceaseless reiteration of one fancy name or one idea can do much, but not everything. The expert advertiser always declares that advertisement cannot sell for long goods intrinsically bad. You cannot sell pure poison by advertising it as a remedy for indigestion, but you can sell pure water for such purposes.

THE DEPTH OF HUMILIATION.—The Nazi urchin-gang has indeed reached that stage of obsession in their hate campaign against England at which the breaking of a collar stud or a bootlace is indeed charged up to English villainy and firmly believed to be due to that cause. And all reason declares that educated Germans—even pro-Nazis—can hardly share the obsession. For many of them only a few months ago were living in our homes observing us for what we are, a race with many faults but not wholly Satanic. How bitterly must many of them suffer under the indignity of Government by an aristocracy of dirty-minded school-boys who rant and bully and boast and threaten, swear and steal and sling mud and ink, and week after week reveal themselves as wobblers and do-littles. It must be the limit of humiliation. It is what Paul Bultitude, senior, of *Vice Versa*, was called on to bear for one term and it marked him for life. The humiliation must fall hardest on the military chiefs. Is there any other instance in history of a great nation handing over its soul and its destinies for a long period to a dictatorship so puerile and so undignified in statesmanship, so primitive, so ignorant, and so brutish? Can a nation that does that and suffers that be or remain great? To what can we liken the present German Government? To the middle form of a nightmare Do-the-Boys Hall, the form in which the overgrown bullies congregate and dominate; to a second-rate prize fighter on the eve of his first fight who rants to the pressmen of his straight left which will put his opponent to sleep in the first round, while his heart is as water within him; to the guttersnipe who cries Yah! as he slings a brick from a place of safety. . . . It must be humiliating indeed for any German who preserves a vestige of mind and dignity.

NAZI HELL.—Life in Germany to-day must be unpleasant for all classes, a condition little sweetened by the promises made of horrors to be rained on England, if Germany is compelled to fight on to the end. For there is hardly a section of the community now immune from the suspicion and persecution of the Gestapo, aflame to regain its lost reputation for efficiency by any means however terrible. The inner circle of the party itself is suspect and spied on. The Gestapo is suspect. The Jews, of course, the monarchists, the Catholics, the military party, all are under suspicion, all are liable to summary arrest on the vaguest suspicion. None dares to speak to his neighbour or raise his voice in a whisper in his own home. Even the Communists cannot be sure

THE ADVANCE GUARD OF THE CANADIAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE IS ALREADY HERE

This consists of nine officers and eighteen N.C.O.s, who are to supervise hospital supplies and ordnance. Colonel P. J. Montague is the Quartermaster-General; he fought with Canada in the last war, and in civilian life is a judge in Manitoba. In this picture Brigadier H. D. G. Crerar, D.S.O., is seated at a map in conference with his officers. Left to right are—Major M. H. S. Penhale, Colonel the Hon. P. J. Montague, C.M.G., D.S.O., M.C., Major A. E. Routier, M.C., and Lieut.-Colonel G. L. M. Burne, O.B.E., M.C.

NEWSLETTER—No. XII

of the prolongation of their temporary immunity from persecution. As for the poorer classes generally, the luxury of grousing must no longer be employed to sweeten the hours in the queues. It is a black winter which now descends on the Reich with enemies spitting hate when they dare, and breathing hate when they dare not spit, on every side; fear and suspicion carried from the streets into the houses, and the dreadful doubt as to the wisdom, if not the justice, of the national cause and policy which is bolstered up by nothing more substantial and comforting than vague threats of terrible vengeance which for ever hang fire. The German race is paying a high price for suffering the enslavement of its individual will.

THE QUEEN'S BROADCAST.—Nine o'clock is the hour of the day when the full indignity of this paper war nightmare is brought home to all who use the radio. We have a wavelength which must be adjusted with the utmost delicacy and constantly readjusted if we are to hear without intolerable interruption the news and talks of our own service. On Armistice night the babel of raucous shrieking was harder than usual to cut out. Insanity Fair was in full blast; in every European language, the sirens and catcalls, the songs and curses, the hates and lies, dinned our ears and drove us to despair. And then through it and at last above it the Queen's voice came out clear and gentle, as the march of the pilgrims dominates and at last stills the Venusburg pandemonium. The radio is no perfect medium for the human voice, perhaps because the art of speaking owes much more than we realise to visual co-operation. A beautiful voice is much, but the speaker's eyes and gestures treble the effect of speech. None the less, one could feel in the Queen's beautifully delivered address much of the intensity of feeling which lies behind every utterance she makes on a theme of national importance. I fancy it is her profound conviction that no one, however highly placed, can convince an audience of his or her enthusiasm for or interest in a cause, unless that enthusiasm and that interest are deep in their hearts and brimming over. And none who heard her words, rising clear and calm and sane above the babel and delirium of imbecility and hate, can fail to have been convinced of the depths of her feelings, of the serenity of her faith in the triumph of right and of the intensity of her sympathy for suffering humanity, of her own courage, wisdom and sense of duty and responsibility.

THE ALLIED WAR COUNCIL MEETS IN DOWNING STREET

The Supreme War Council held its third meeting in London on Friday when the French chiefs, including General Gamelin, leader of the Allied armies, and M. Daladier, French Premier and War Minister, came over specially. The Council at this meeting took the momentous step of pooling all their resources to achieve the greatest possible degree of unity in the joint war effort. This picture, taken at the conclusion of the proceedings in No. 10, shows (from left to right): Admiral of the Fleet Darlan (French Naval Chief), Sir Kingsley Wood (British Air Minister), General Vuillemin (Chief of the French Air Staff), and General Gamelin

SAFETY FIRST.—Business took me last week into a part of the country which I have always regarded as Safety Area No. 1 in modern war. It lies to the west. It is remote from the sea coast, it is purely agricultural, it is most lonely and sparsely inhabited, it has no industries, and to-day no more than the inevitable military establishments. Yet its air-raid precautions put into the shade the efforts I have observed in areas called dangerous. For miles and miles it gave me the impression of a brigade headquarters half a mile from the front line. One little lost village in particular enthralled me. It was snowed under in sandbags and notices. There were more dugouts than shops or cottages. It was like a place constantly under shell-fire for years. It was like Fricourt on the Somme. There were direction-posts pointing the route for mass evacuation; a score more pointing out the entrance to obvious dugouts. Lost in the immensity of a bleak and western wold, this little village is unlikely to hear even the sound of anti-aircraft fire, much less of a dropped bomb, even if war on England be intensified to the *n*th degree. Truly the Englishman, when at last he gets an idea into his head, carries it out with the crusading spirit, without counting the cost.

THE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER GOES SHOPPING

Major-General the Duke of Gloucester arrived in London on short leave from France on November 17. He took the opportunity of accompanying the Duchess on a shopping tour in Bond Street, where this happy snapshot was taken

POOR LADY CAROLINE.—At a late hour I take up the cudgels for my poor little great-great-great-etc.-aunt, Lady Caroline Lamb, née Ponsonby. When her mother first set eyes on that little elf-like face, could she, could any living person, have imagined that that quite unimportant and not very highly gifted individual would "launch a thousand ships" from the publishing yards? How many books have been written, how many libraries could be filled, with the oft-told tale of Lady Caroline's short incursion into Byron's life? Who could count? And she made no more impression on Byron than did poor Lady Fanny Webster. She was—what? Just a curiosity of her day, a very highly-strung, volatile, versatile, spoilt-darling in the inner ring of the society of her day, with no strong character to influence men or events (like Princess Lieven); a pretty face and an enlarged ego. What proof of bankruptcy in ideas, in characters and in incidents of importance in our own day that our bookmakers must forever harp on that string and forever disinter poor fragile Lady Caroline. "Vex not her soul. They hate her that would upon the rack of this rough world stretch her out further." Besides, she isn't worth it, and there is nothing new to say of her. In the last month she has been twice more unburied. Miss Colburn Mayne is too skilled a writer to be spared fair criticism. She has contributed soundly to our light on Byron and I fancy she would honestly admit that her *Regency Chapter* is a potboiler, hastily boiled. She allows some startling errors to get through her net. She sets out to chronicle the Ponsonby family and misspells the name-place of their origin—Hale or Heale but never Haile. She allows Lady Caroline's father to shoot *grouse* at Roehampton! This surely must be the origin (at last) of the story of "old grouse in the gunroom." Unless she refers to black grouse; for an occasional blackcock *may* have been flushed as late as 1800 on Wimbledon Common, where my grandfather certainly shot snipe, and where I shot partridges as late as 1900. As it is from a paper written by myself that Miss Mayne misquotes, I feel justified in pointing out these facts. These and several more minor errors glare out. There is one more important. Miss Mayne returns thanks to Lord Bessborough for permission to use extensive verbatim quotation from the *Private Correspondence* of Lord Granville Leveson Gower. That is wrong. I venture to think she had the authority for, and the use of, only a very small proportion of the copyright.

SHOOTING ACCIDENTS.—Since the war started several serious shooting accidents have been reported, resulting in death or loss of a limb. At any time such accidents are deplorable. In times of war, when everyone lives under the shadow of death, they are even more grievous for all concerned. And the loss of valuable services which they entail enhances the tragedy. Shooting accidents there have always been and must be, since a loaded gun is a dangerous weapon and human error cannot be eliminated. But experience of shooting for forty years convinces me that the percentage of danger in shooting has greatly increased since the last war. In my own youth, the precautions and discipline insisted on before a boy might put a cartridge into a gun and go out with a party were inculcated meticulously over a long period. Every gun-room was hung with the famous rhymed distich—the shooter's safety-first—"Never, never let your gun . . ." A boy was made to carry an empty gun for weeks before he might put a cartridge in, and every instance of thoughtlessness—the pointing of his empty gun—put back the day of enfranchisement. He was forbidden to fire at ground game into a covert under any circumstance. When he came to using two guns, his loader was exhaustively put through his paces in "dumb-show." Nowadays anyone is called on to load. One sees loaders snapping *up* the barrels in line with their master's thigh; one constantly observes grown men crossing a low fence or a grip with loaded guns; and taking their position in the line without bothering to locate their neighbours or to inquire about stops. Nay, I have seen grown men get into a shooting brake with a loaded gun. It is a thousand pities and is largely the result of the lack of discipline in which that war generation came to manhood.

THE OLD STAGER

Above—**THE END OF ANOTHER GERMAN MENACE**—A firing squad exploding a mine which has been cut free by the "sweep"

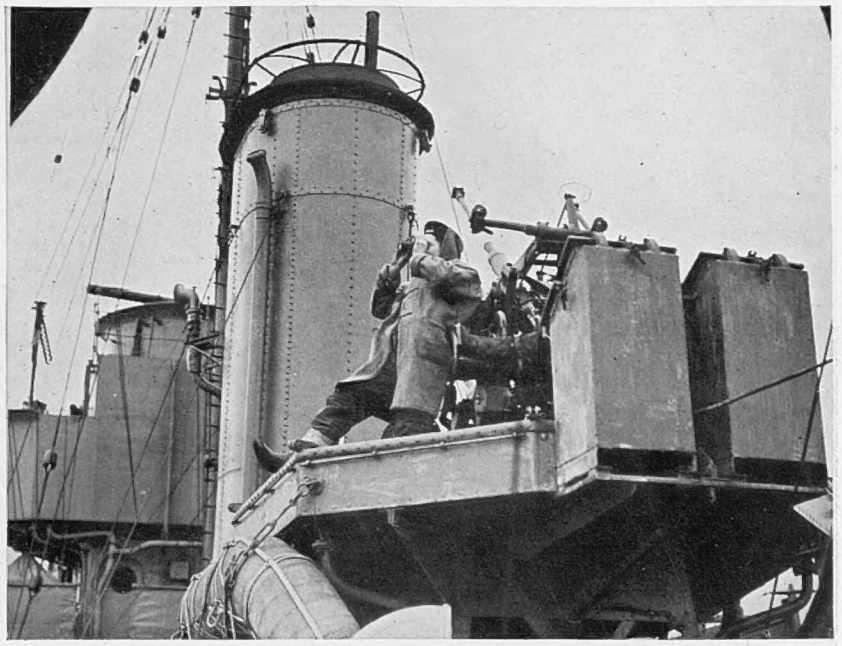
On left—**A GUN'S CREW** manning a high-angle anti-aircraft gun during sweeping operations in the North Sea

ON BOARD THE MINESWEEPER—ACTION STATIONS ON THE FORWARD GUN WHEN UNIDENTIFIED AIRCRAFT ARE SIGHTED

Not daring to bring out their surface craft, the Germans are attacking our shipping by means of torpedoes and mines. The loss of the "Simon Bolivar" (illustrated on another page of this issue) and other vessels in the North Sea is evidence of the Germans' determination to wage a war of "frightfulness" on enemy and neutral alike. Keeping the main sea routes free of these deadly mines is one of the less spectacular, but essential and perilous, jobs which are being quietly carried out by the Royal Navy. The pictures reproduced on these pages show how constant vigil is maintained during the arduous task of minesweeping. All the naval vessels illustrated here are heavily armed against aerial attack; and whilst the work of sweeping goes on, constant watch is maintained to detect and beat off enemy aircraft. The actual capture of mines is carried out by means of long wire "sweeps" towed by the specially-equipped naval sweepers or minesweeping trawlers.

IN THE NORTH SEA WITH THE MINESWEEPERS OF THE BRITISH NAVY—AN R.A.F. ESCORT PLANE FLIES OVER THE SWEEPERS, ON CONSTANT LOOK-OUT AGAINST ENEMY SUBMARINES AND OTHER DANGERS

Above—A formidable anti-aircraft gun—always manned



Above—The look-out on duty beside his anti-aircraft gun

THE NAVY SWEEPS THE NORTH SEA OF ENEMY MINES

On left—The navigator (warmly clad) plots his course

On right—Captain and navigator on the sweeper's bridge

GRACIE FIELDS with the B.E.F.

War Office Official Photographs From France

(Crown Copyright Reserved)

JUST LIKE THE OLD DAYS.—SCOTTISH TROOPS BUILDING TRENCHES THROUGH VIRGIN COUNTRY ALONG THE BRITISH FRONT IN FRANCE. THE OLD FAMILIAR DUCK-BOARDS OF THE LAST WAR ARE AGAIN MAKING THEIR APPEARANCE

ON SENTRY GO WITH A PERISCOPE.—A SCOTTISH TROOPER, NICELY ENSCONCED AGAINST THE COLD AND DAMP, MAINTAINS HIS WATCH FROM THE SAFETY OF AN UNDERGROUND SHELTER

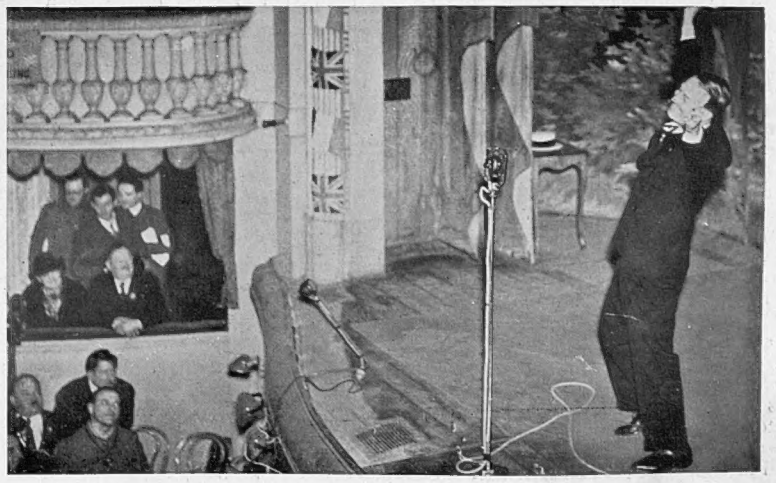
A COMFORTABLE BILLET FOR A BRITISH DETACHMENT.—TROOPS MARCHING INTO A FORTIFIED POSITION NEAR THE FRONT LINE. THE ODD ERECTIONS ABOVE THE FORTRESS ARE THE OUTLETS OF VENTILATING SHAFTS. NOTE ALSO THE MOAT WHICH SURROUNDS THE POSITION

MISS GRACIE FIELDS (AGAINST HER DOCTOR'S ORDERS) SINGS TO THE TROOPS. —AT A CONCERT WHERE 3,000 BRITISH SOLDIERS WERE RECENTLY ENTERTAINED IN THE LARGE CINEMA OF A TOWN IN THE FORWARD AREA IN FRANCE

THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF AT THE CONCERT.—LORD GORT (IN THE CENTRE BOX), SURROUNDED BY BRITISH AND FRENCH OFFICERS AND MEN, APPLAUDS MAURICE CHEVALIER'S PERFORMANCE

THE ARTISTES RECEIVE AN OVATION FROM THE TROOPS. — ON GRACIE FIELDS'S RIGHT IS MISS CLAIRE LUCE AND THE OTHER ARTISTES WHO ASSISTED IN THE PROGRAMME. THIS ENTERTAINMENT UNIT ONLY RECENTLY LANDED IN FRANCE, HEADED BY SIR SEYMOUR HICKS

QUEUING UP FOR THE SHOW.—PART OF THE SERVICE AUDIENCE LINING UP FOR SEATS IN THE APOLLO CINEMA FOR THE LONG-EXPECTED PERFORMANCE BY GRACIE FIELDS AND THE OTHER DISTINGUISHED ARTISTES SEEN ABOVE



MAURICE CHEVALIER ALSO ENTERTAINS.—THIS PICTURE WAS TAKEN AT A CONCERT ORGANISED BY NOEL COWARD WHO WAS ASSISTED BY A SUPPORTING CAST OF SOLDIER-AMATEURS

THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE HAS GONE

Nor Can the German Situation Change Without Our Knowledge (The Strategy of the War—IX)

By GENERAL SIR CHARLES HARINGTON, G.C.B., G.B.E., D.S.O., D.C.L.

ALTHOUGH little of importance has happened in the field of operations by sea, land or air since I wrote last week, I do think that the situation as a whole is becoming more clear. Every day seems to bring us nearer to grim realities. The French and German communiqués from the Western Front are still rather pathetic. As I write, I have just heard that twenty men from each side have had a scrap with no result. It is difficult to realise after nearly three months of war, when one thinks of the last war, but there it is. To me it is only evidence that mud and the appalling strength of the Maginot Line have, for the time being, won, and that Hitler has to seek other means of entry.

Last week we heard of tremendous concentrations against both Belgium and Holland, of preparations for the use of gas, of arrival of cavalry, and we all expected to hear next morning of the German advance into those countries or, at any rate, into one of them. Nothing, however, happened and has not, at the time of writing, happened. Furthermore, Hitler has said since that any idea of violating the neutrality of Holland and Belgium had never entered his head and never would as long as Holland and Belgium observed their neutrality and as long as France and Britain did not violate it.

So far, so good. It is quite clear that the Allies will not break it. The fate of Holland and Belgium, therefore, boils down to Hitler's word. Is he, at long last, going to make an exception and keep it? We wait and see. We know the reasoned and dignified replies of our own King and M. Lebrun to the splendid appeal of Queen Wilhelmina and King Leopold, in the interests of peace, and we know the subtle way in which Hitler contrived to evade the issue by placing the blame for the continuance of the war on the French and British, almost insinuating that, but for the British and French, peace could easily have been secured.

We can stand a good deal and we do not mind politicians of one country abusing those of another country, as it is their usual technique, but we cannot stand Von Ribbentrop, as reported, having the impertinence to describe our own King's reply as "impudent." That does not come well from one who has enjoyed the courtesy of having been accredited to the Court of St. James.

After years spent in connection with the defence of the Ypres salient in the last war, I know enough about gas and its disappointments at this time of year owing to the prevailing wind to support Major-General Swinton's views expressed in his recent broadcast. The first time it was ever used, against the Canadians early in 1915, it was successful and the wind was just right, but it never really succeeded again when employed by either side, and I have no fear of it, more especially at this time of year.

To summarise, therefore, the situation on the Western Front to-day, we find the French Army and their comrades of the British Army safely housed and ready for whatever may happen, quite calm and determined, rather bored, but with their morale at its highest peak.

As regards the British, one had only to listen to the applause given to Miss Gracie Fields a few nights ago from quite near the front line. We read of Mr. Eden and the Dominion representatives being entertained in the Maginot Line, 200 ft. below the surface; in my mode of measurement this means three cricket pitches in depth.

In my opinion also the element of surprise has gone. The Allied airmen appear to have been able to fly over the German lines at will and to have secured all the photographs they required. If this is so, then every aerodrome, munition dump, artillery position, railhead, and railway line must have long since been pin-pricked on the maps at Allied headquarters. It brings back to me such memories of when we used to plan out this sort of information when obtained in the last war, but now cameras are so much better, which must make it easier. The above is how I visualise the Western Front to-day and with the trusted and proved eyes of the R.A.F. to-day, I do not see how the German situation can change without our knowledge.

Then we come to the recent announcement of the Germans that any idea of activity on their part in south-eastern Europe is simply fantastic. That is good news and will be welcome in that part of the world, especially in Rumania. If, therefore, Hitler has no intention whatever of going either west or south-east, where is he going?

Is he going, like the armies of old, into winter quarters? It is quite possible in this "strangest of wars." If he does we shall welcome it. We can afford to "sit" longer and much more comfortably than he can, and what will appeal to the B.E.F. will be that they will get lots of leave. If the armies go into "winter quarters," the Navy and Air Forces will not, and when the great German Army awakes again from its winter sleep, it may find the situation both by sea and air considerably changed.

It may find that Russia, used to winter conditions, has bagged a few more bases. It may find that the Balkan bloc is a very much better team and a much more formidable one. It may find that a tremendous amount of stuff has come over from America, and it may find that there are very few German warships, U-boats or merchantmen left on the high seas. It may also find that the German nation is getting both hungry and impatient.

In our own country things are getting more normal and settled. As the war has taken a course anticipated by no one, it is easy to criticise the evacuation and other measures which were taken hurriedly, and had to be, in view of probable air attack, but as events have turned out and as winter has come, it is possible for certain relaxations to be made, and these are much appreciated by all.

Time has also enabled the various organisations for helping the men of the Services, both at home and abroad, to be formed on sound lines which will work smoothly.

Hospitals have been equipped in readiness. The work of the Red Cross and the Order of St. John has been firmly established, and the arrangements for supplying wants to our prisoners of war.

The arrangements also for giving entertainments to the troops, the provision of radio sets, etc., are all of good value.

THE CHIEF OF THE IMPERIAL GENERAL STAFF SLEEPS AT THE OFFICE THESE DAYS

General Sir Edmund Ironside works in a fine room with a good view at the War Office. This room is also used as a bedchamber as he has not been home for over ten weeks—since the war began in fact. His camp bed and his field boots are both ready "for instant action" in front of his desk. Lady Ironside (*inset above*) spends a lot of her time sewing for the Red Cross: her daughter, Miss Elspeth Ironside, is a corporal in the A.T.S. and is driver to General Sir Walter Kirke, Commander-in-Chief of the Home Forces

We had none of these things in the last war until it was far advanced.

There is rumour, as I write, of the dismissal of several high officials in the German Air Force. It is difficult to know if this is in consequence of the views they hold of Hitlerism or in consequence of the poor results obtained so far by the German Air Force. Anyhow, the swopping of horses so far in the war does not make for efficiency and team-work.

Presumably, in a nation like Germany one can presume that its best men were at the helm when the war started. It may, of course, be that they are not in agreement with Hitler's latest decision of frightfulness and nothing but frightfulness, in the same way as we have been led to believe that the senior generals have not been in agreement with any plan for hurling their troops against the Maginot Line.

We also heard earlier in the war that Admiral Raeder was much concerned and offered his resignation over the presentation of the Baltic bases to Stalin.

All these are in marked contrast to the very happy relationships which evidently exist to-day between the heads of not only the Services but also between the Governments and Ministers of the French and British nations.

When one adds to that the overtime being put in at the moment by all our Dominions in order to give of their best, it cannot fail to give us a very deep feeling of strength and confidence in the future.

The Supreme War Council held in London on November 17 confirms the above. It is good to hear of such complete unanimity, not only as regards the Services, but as regards all our economic arrangements—the imports and exports of each country and the pooling of resources for the benefit of both nations and for the elimination of all competition. How different to the last war in which we did not come together in this way till the third year of the war.

With the air full of reports of restlessness in the German nation and of rioting in Czechoslovakia, and of difficulties and jealousies amongst the high command and high officials, it is difficult to deduce the true state of affairs. I pay little attention to these reports. A great nation like Germany does not show signs of cracking at this early stage. Its people are too used to discipline and privation. It may be true that they did not know at the outbreak that they were being pitted against both France and England, but once committed they have no say in the matter. They only have to obey.

I think that all one can say at the moment is that there are signs that the team controlling Germany to-day, controlling both its forces and its resources, and the nation as a whole, is not as happy a team as that controlling the Allied nations as depicted above. I think further that this will prove to be a very important factor in the not distant future. It is true that there must be in Germany to-day many very unhappy people evicted from their homes in the Baltic States and elsewhere and dumped down against their will in the area of Poland captured by Germany, and in other places. They can but submit at the moment; but their passive resentment may have an effect later on when conditions worsen throughout the Reich.

It may be that little bundles of sticks are being collected in various places with which to light bonfires later in opposition to the Nazi regime, but the hour for lighting is a long way off as yet. We have just to rest and be thankful for three months respite which Hitler has, quite unexpectedly, given us and during which the Allied nations have been able to build up a combined and efficient machine such as never before known in history. Behind that machine stand two united nations. Hitler may know this by now.

THE LITHUANIAN ARMY ENTERS VILNA: ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 29

FORMAL ENTRY OF THE LITHUANIAN FORCES INTO THE ANCIENT CAPITAL CITY OF VILNA

After a pause at the Polish frontier, when it seemed that Moscow was undecided whether after all to allow the Lithuanians to occupy Vilna, an advance to the city was made on Sunday, October 29, by the Lithuanian army, the Commander of the Vilna Garrison, General Vitkauskas, being present with General Raskitis. The infantry were accompanied by motorised units

Students and citizens of Vilna follow the Lithuanian troops through Vilna's streets

LITHUANIAN TROOPS MARCHING PAST AN HISTORIC CHAPEL

In the background is seen the pillared façade of the Ostrabania Chapel in which Marshal Pilsudski's heart lies entombed — a clash of emotional interest

It was generally understood that, under the recent arrangement between the U.S.S.R. and Lithuania, the district and city of Vilna, the historic capital of Lithuania, was to be handed over to that country as part of the bargain. The ceding of this territory by Russia was a particularly interesting event, for it was a dramatic reversal of the recent trend of events which had all seemed to be working against the good fortune of this historic city. Vilna had been snatched violently from Lithuania by a local Polish coup in 1920, and during the succeeding years Lithuania had maintained a frozen frontier against Poland. About a year ago Poland determined that this state of things must terminate and marshalling her battalions in the neighbourhood of this closed frontier, induced Lithuania to open her doors to Polish intercourse.

Then came the crushing defeat of Poland, the entry of the U.S.S.R. upon the scene and the permitted advance of Lithuanian troops towards Vilna. At the frontier, for doubtless several powerful reasons, there was a pause and it was not until October 29 that the frontier posts were sawn in two and Lithuania in the person of General Vitkauskas entered the city of Vilna amid scenes of great popular enthusiasm. The streets, profusely beflagged, were thronged by cheering crowds, who pelted the soldiers with flowers.

The city was found in a semi-famished condition, and the entry of the Lithuanian troops was immediately followed by numerous trains bringing foodstuffs and provisions of all kinds. Energetic action by the Lithuanian authorities quickly re-established order, and the city, having now become the centre of Lithuanian life, looks forward, we are assured, with confidence towards a brighter future.

b

A British light tank advancing through a smoke screen

THE tank made its appearance in the Great War as a brilliant mechanical improvisation to restore the emasculated power of the offensive. The opposing armies had bombarded and machine-gunned each other into a state of troglodytic immobility. Stalemate must be broken at all costs. Thus necessity mothered the tank.

Twenty years have seen the apotheosis of the tank, not only in the gigantic armoured corps of France and Russia, but also in the gradual conversion of the armies of most other countries into snorting and grunting conglomerates of steel and petrol. To-day the most formidable land forces of history face each other on the European continent, and their most carefully-tended as well as most imponderable weapon is the tank. I say imponderable because the tank does, in fact, remain to be proved.

I must draw a line at once, for the purposes of my discussion, between the tank proper and other mechanised units of the modern army. The tank, a steel box travelling by motor power, containing crew and guns, and serving as a peripatetic fort in battle, is in itself a weapon. Perhaps it is the most effective weapon we possess. On the other hand, perhaps it is a big white elephant.

Certainly it has improved since the last war. Speed has been increased from about 10 m.p.h. to about 30 m.p.h.; fuel capacity from 15 to 125 miles; armour from ½-in. to 1½-in. in thickness. The modern tank is far easier to drive than its Great War prototype, and is very much more versatile, while it is not so likely to break down at crucial moments.

The largest tank strength is that of France, consisting mainly of light models, as the French were most successful with that type in the last war. The famous Renault 35 heads the bill, a two-man tank of 8 tons weight, heavily armoured, carrying a light anti-tank gun and a machine-gun, and capable of about 12 m.p.h. across country. The Hotchkiss 35 is similar. Recently, however, the French have developed several larger models, answering a German increase in size and weight. It is said that one of the new French monsters, weighing 68 tons, with very thick armour, two guns, two machine-guns, and a speed of nearly 20 m.p.h., is quite without equal in the armies of the world.

Actually the Germans themselves have been rather unfortunate with tanks. They started by doubting their practicability in the Great War, and afterwards, of course, were precluded by the Treaty of Versailles from building them. However, they did their best with experimental models of wood and cloth, so that when Hitler gave the word, large numbers of light tanks could be built. Like the French, they considered that the light tank was the best, and they favoured a miniature machine of only 4 tons, carrying two men and two machine-guns, with a pretty burst of speed. But these tanks did not prove very successful in the Spanish Civil War, and subsequently Germany has been experimenting with heavier types, now narrowed down, it is believed, to two. One type weighs 8 tons and has a light gun and a machine-gun; the other weighs 12 tons and has a small howitzer or mortar. Apparently Germany has about 1,200 tanks in all.

Soviet Russia beats Germany in tank strength, however, and comes second only to France, from whom she has borrowed many ideas and models. The main Soviet tank types, indeed, are less efficient copies of the leading French, British and American types, although it is rumoured that some attention has recently been paid to the development of an "amphibian," perhaps in anticipation of trouble with water defences. Italy also has been credited with amphibious tendencies in tank design, but her principal tank type is light and speedy, with a very good performance record over rough, mountainous country.

As for the tanks of the British Army, it is neither politic nor permissible to deal with them save in the broadest terms. But it can be said at once that, although the immediate post-war tendency was to concentrate on the heavy models that had been so successful at Cambrai and Amiens, British designers have lately covered a wide field, and the B.E.F. is now equipped with all kinds of tanks, from the new, three-man, light tanks to heavily-armed and armoured "cruisers." In common with the other belligerents, we would doubtless be ready at short notice to produce still larger models, veritable "battleships" of the land, tremendous crawling fortresses, with several gun-turrets and machine-guns of various calibres. The exigencies of war will call the tune, and we have the comforting reflection that we would at least be able to pay the piper.

But so far there has been no opportunity of testing the tank as a major weapon against an adversary of its own size and equipped with modern anti-tank defences. Italy and Japan have employed it very effectively against Abyssinia and China, but met no real anti-tank resistance. Large numbers of tanks were used on both sides in the Spanish Civil War, and invariably the heavy Russians routed the lighter Germans and Italians in tank-to-tank combat. But all three were frequently routed by Spanish soldiers armed only with primitive flame-throwers, sticks of gelignite, and tins of petrol.

Often the light models became uncontrollable when attacking at speed. But just as often the heavy Russians became bogged, and Spanish ditches still testify to that great discomfiture. It is generally agreed, however, that tank personnel in that war was largely untrained and inefficient, that the terrain was often unsuitable, and that anti-tank defences were primitive.

I have pointed out that the tank was evolved as a means of restoring initiative to the offensive. Thus it is regarded by some commanders to-day—perhaps Hitler may be among them—as pre-eminently the spearhead weapon of a new war of movement. The Germans employed it thus in the Polish campaign, when armoured columns penetrated swiftly into the enemy territory, and occupied key positions.

Once again, however, tanks were operating against inferiors, and the campaign has few lessons for those commanders on the Western Front who are awaiting their first engagement with equals. A French expert has observed of the Spanish Civil War: "Whenever a tank attack has met with strong, well-handled anti-tank defences, it has been annihilated or immobilised, and has failed to accomplish its task. Where such defences are lacking, or are no longer intact, the tank attack has gone home with almost mathematical precision."

Concentrations of tanks, however camouflaged, will not long escape the eye of the air observer in this war, and thus will be deprived of the element of surprise at the outset. Crossing the enemy lines eventually, the awkward vehicles will have to surmount all kinds of cunningly-placed obstacles and mines before facing a barrage of destructive fire from anti-tank guns, which can defeat all but the thickest armour.

The modern infantryman is being encouraged, moreover, to treat tanks with rather less respect than his father, and is being supplied with new weapons such as flame-throwers and chemical projectors—I am speaking of certain Continental armies—with which to attack them at close quarters. In the last war tanks were often immobilised by infantry with grenades and even with pistols, poked into cracks. And then the invaders would have to meet the counter-attacks of the defenders' own ironclads.

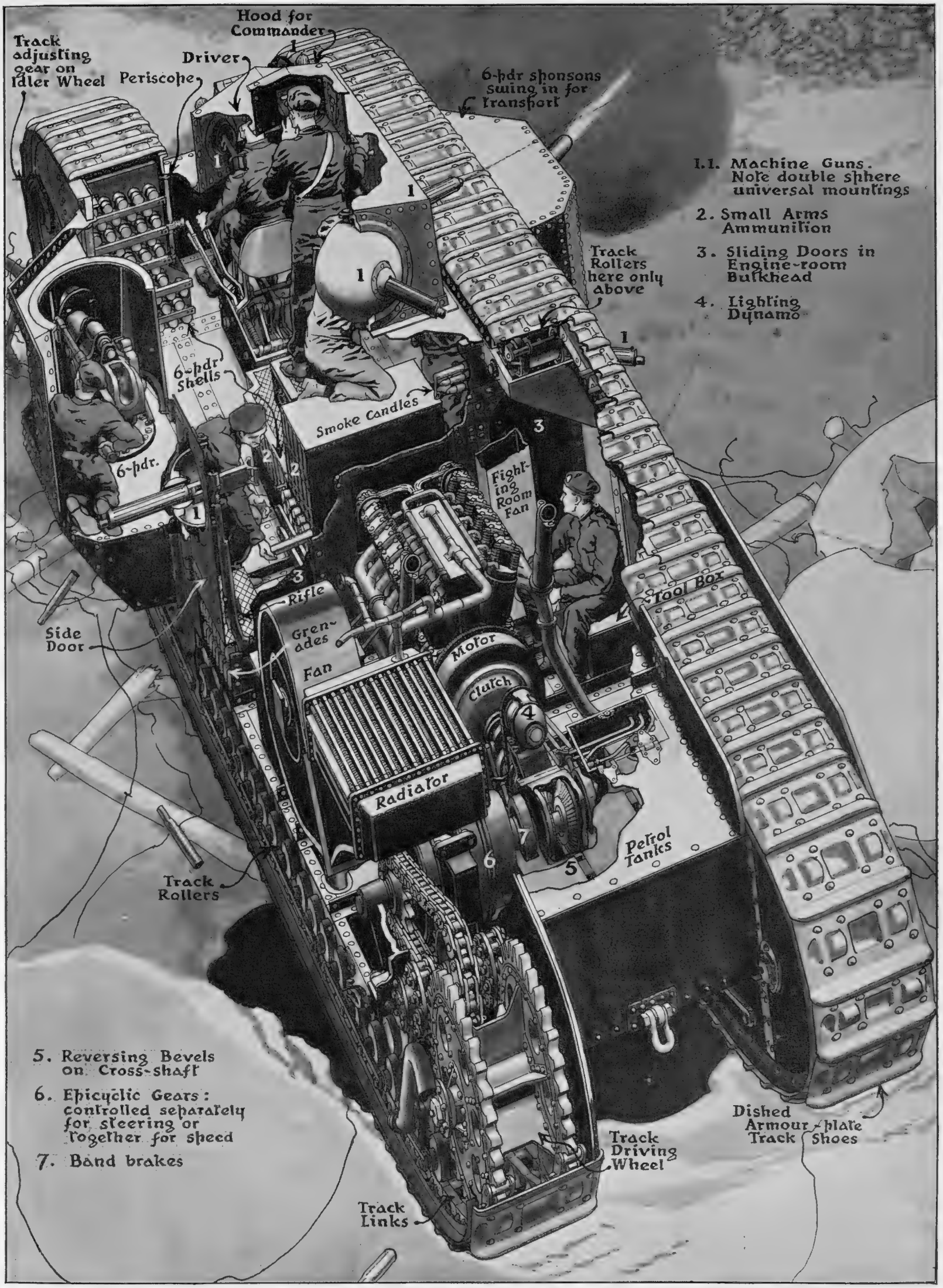
It does seem that the tank, however redoubtable, will not prove a weapon of decisive importance in this war, when both sides have strong defences. This is not to say that armoured vehicles of all kinds will not be used very effectively, and will not be used increasingly. I only refer to the tank as a major offensive weapon—and I like to remember Crecy.

Donald Cowie

"THE SPHERE"

On right—**A LECTURE ON FOREIGN TANKS**

Tank drivers are receiving information concerning three different foreign tanks. The lecturer is pointing to a German light tank 11 ft. 6 ins. in length. To the left on his board is a Russian BT tank with a length of 19 ft. 2 ins. and a weight of 12 tons. The performance of this tank is shown beneath—a speed of 30 m.p.h. is indicated. An Italian light Fiat-Ansaldo tank is also illustrated. This has a length of 10 ft. 6 ins. The height is only 4 ft. 6 ins.



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The BRITISH MARK VIII HEAVY TANK

Pictured in Full Detail for the First Time, Specially for this Issue, by S. W. Clatworthy

For the first time in any British publication, the full inner details of a British heavy tank are here revealed. This drawing, made after a special study of the subject by the artist, shows the Mark VIII heavy tank which, in its construction, embodies all the lessons of the Great War and strongly resembles the Allied giant machines now in use. Some of these, our readers will recall, were recently announced as being some 70 tons in weight. The Mark VIII pictured here carries a crew of eight; it weighs 37 tons, is 35 ft. in length, and is able to span a gap of 13 ft. with ease. The water-cooled engine develops 300 h.p., and the armament consists of two 6-pounder guns with 200 shells, and seven machine-guns with 13,000 rounds. The disposition of the crew and the various guns is well brought out in our drawing. Controlling all the activities of this fort on wheels is the commander, who stands above the driver and directs operations from behind his armoured hood. Like the submarine, space is very confined, and everything has to be stowed in its exact place. The noise and vibration and shock can better be imagined than described

THE VARIED TANKS WHICH THE BRITISH

IN ORDER TO MEET THE NEEDS OF ACTUAL WARFARE, THE ARMY DESIGNERS HAVE PRODUCED NOT ONE TYPE OF TANK, BUT MANY

Here, in these composite groupings, th forms of British tanks. Some are sing bigger complement; all have the cat on various kinds of tread. In fact, a stu

DIFFERING TYPES OF BRITISH TANKS OF TO-DAY DEMONSTRATING THEIR SPEED AND ADAPTABILITY TO DIFFICULT TERRAIN

From these new impressions of Britis can form some idea of the skill require the driver, to work a tank, to discover ju differing terrains and in different weathe frost that was wanted to make the goi and 1918. "At the present time," write

ARMY HAS EVOLVED: Special Types For Special Needs

reader can study the varying tanks in action the reader especially on the part of what it will and won't do on In the Great War it was good for the tanks of 1917 Professor A. M. Low in his

great is their variety. The same applies to the groups shown below. The tendency after the Great War experience of tanks was to favour the very heavy, but now, writes Professor A. M. Low in his *Modern Armaments*, just published by John Gifford, "The pendulum then seems new volume referred to above, "tanks may be divided into three classes. First of all there are the very light tanks, the equivalent of cavalry. Then there are the mixed tanks, fighting as a brigade, and finally the tanks for infantry co-operation, performing the tasks given to the first tanks used in the Great War. I believe that the tank is a weapon with which those in authority have learned their lesson. They

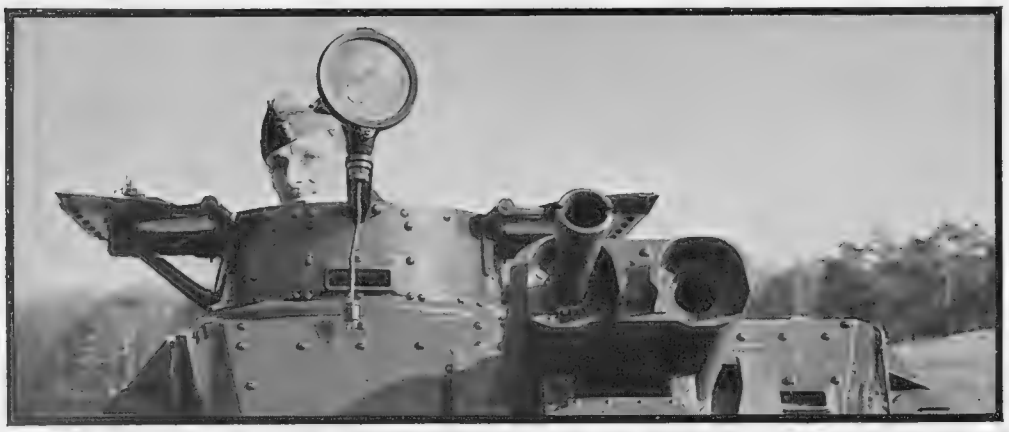
to have swung towards the light tank. A one-man tank of great mobility was produced and later converted to a two-man tank, with one soldier steering while the other fired, the tank relying on great speed, up to 40 m.p.h. or more, to avoid destruction" have resisted the temptation of building a vast army of heavy vehicles which would look excellent on a birthday parade, but might prove exceedingly vulnerable in future hostilities. The vital importance of speed is, at last, appreciated. They have been fortunate in having behind them the best engineers in the world and the benefit of Britain's great motor industry."

GUN TURRETS of BRITISH TANKS

Scenes with the Light Armoured Brigade

Though the tanks illustrated in this section retain the original caterpillar method of propulsion, they are not enclosed entirely within the travelling band, as was the case with the "mother tank," the construction of which Mr. Balfour sanctioned when the scheme was almost dying in 1915. It vindicated itself in Hatfield Park in January, 1916,

THE LIGHT ARMOURED BRIGADE GOING INTO ACTION They are moving forward on their 10-wheel bases with the gun turret open to demonstrate the gunner's position. The searchlight is placed high up in comparison with the wing position shown on the German tanks (*see* opposite page). *Below*—A well-armoured gun turret and searchlight spotter



GUNNER AND DRIVER take the air as this tank emerges from the smoke

and in September of that year thirty-one tanks actually crossed the German trenches. Nine of these surmounted all difficulties and did wonders, the sight of them creating either flight or surrender. This action was a minor one—the first real test was at Cambrai in 1917 when 500 tanks were available. There was no artillery preparation.

"The attack," says the historian of the Tank Corps (Colonel Fuller), "was a stupendous success. As the tanks moved forward, with the infantry following close behind, the enemy completely lost his balance, and those who did not fly panic-stricken from the field surrendered—one of the most astonishing battles in all history."

TANK GUNNERS IN ACTION ON THE "PELLET RANGE" *The gunner is placed in a skeleton tank which is operated by machinery producing the movement of a tank travelling over rough ground. The gunner aims his gun and fires, but not with shells. Affixed to his gun is an air rifle, the gunner actually firing lead pellets. He is able to see the result of his fire on the miniature landscape in front of him*

TANKS: Allied, Enemy and Neutral

FRANCE

One of the "heavy-weights" of our Ally's tank forces climbing a rise

FRANCE

Another "heavy-weight" with caterpillar wheels protected by side armour, a useful adjunct in certain circumstances. The armoured conning tower of the gunner is pivoted on the main structure, through a front part of which the driver has to judge the difficulties of the country in front of him

Mr. Herbert Rosiski, in a newly-published volume, *The German Army* (Hogarth Press), says that: "The development of the tank arm forms the most interesting section of the new German Army, in view of the fact that Germany had had few tanks in the World War and none during the period before rearmament. German tank construction at first concentrated upon a light, thinly-armoured, fast tank which they started to produce in great masses. These first German tanks proved themselves definitely inferior to the heavier Russian models in Spain, and German tank policy has turned to heavier models. The Germans are stated to be concentrating on the idea of speed and at making it into an independent arm capable of making free use of its strength"

GERMANY

These three German tanks are being driven forward on caterpillar bands of rather open form. They were photographed, apparently, working through a smoke barrage. On the right the conning tower is open and directions are being given. The other two are closed, as they would be when in action against an enemy

SWEDEN

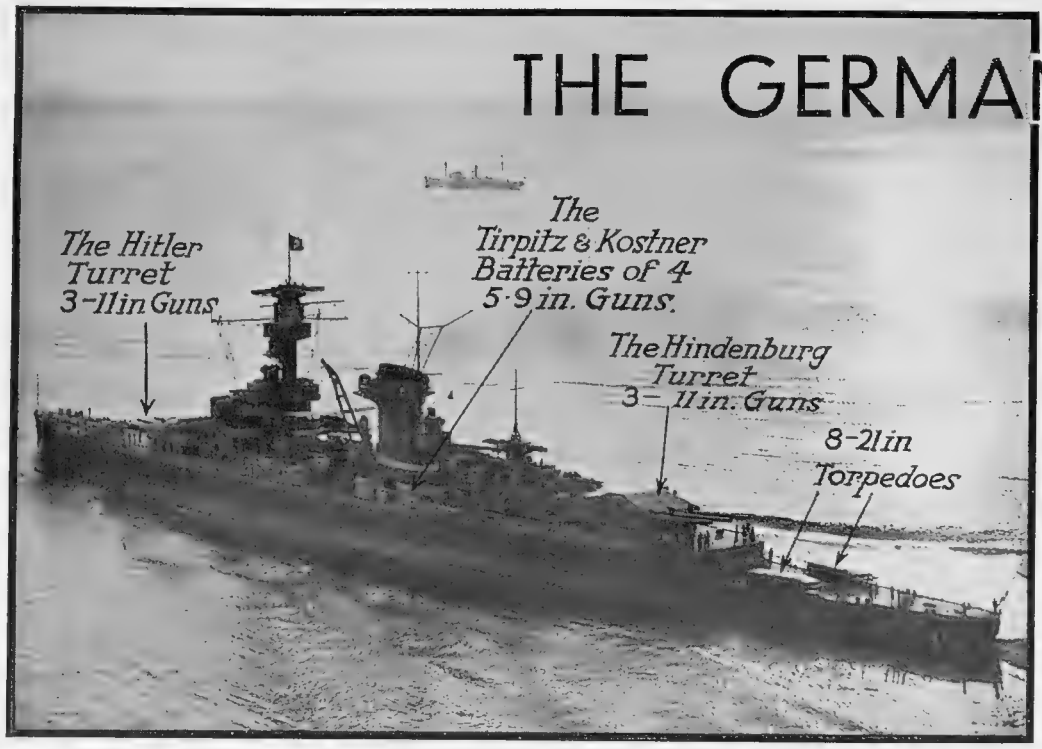
This Swedish tank runs on composite bands of rather complex form. The driver appears to occupy a more forward position than in other European types

SOVIET RUSSIA

This picture from Poland shows heavily-built Russian armoured cars on wheel-bases rather like tanks. These were passing along a road into Poland and encountering no resistance. They are the only types of armoured vehicles recorded so far

THE GERMAN RAIDERS

And the British and French Vessels Which Are Hunting Them

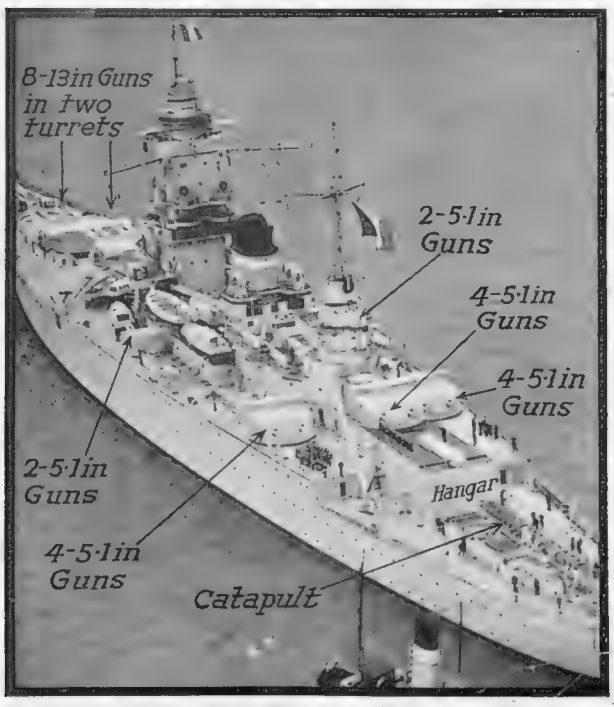


ONE OF THE TWO GERMAN RAIDERS WHICH HAVE BEEN AT LARGE FOR SOME WEEKS

The *Deutschland* is one of the 10,000-ton pocket battleships built by Germany in pre-Hitler days. She is heavily armed for her size and carries eight torpedoes on her quarter-deck, an unusual battleship feature. She is not a comfortable ship in heavy weather

THE FRENCH BATTLESHIP "STRASBOURG" WHICH IS HELPING IN THE SEARCH FOR THE "DEUTSCHLAND"

She is built comparatively low at the two ends with a raised section amidships, not only giving the guns greater command—the second 13-in. turret has to be raised a deck in any circumstances in order to fire over the first—but also giving increased accommodation. There are sixteen 5·1-in. guns mounted in five turrets



THE FRENCH BATTLESHIP "DUNKERQUE" SEEN FROM THE AIR

The *Dunkerque* is of the same type as the *Strasbourg* with certain minor differences. Both are built up amidships, and are very different in form to anything in the British Navy

THE MAN WHO SAW THE "ADMIRAL SCHEER"—CAPT. F. C. P. HARRIS

The master of the British ship *Clement* (5,051 tons), sunk by a raider in the South Atlantic, went to the Admiralty where he definitely identified the vessel as the *Admiral Scheer*

THE escape of two units of the *Deutschland* class through the British blockade line, and their operations in distant seas, have naturally drawn attention to these vessels which have probably been discussed more than any other fighting ships afloat at the present time, yet so many entirely false ideas of their prowess have been spread abroad that it is doubtful whether there are any ships about which the layman's ideas are more hazy.

It must be remembered that there was still great opposition to any revival of the German Navy when these ships were planned, and this opposition, especially among the Socialist element of the Reichstag, rapidly increased when it had to be announced that they would cost more per ton than any warship in the world. The first of the type, the *Deutschland*, worked out at roughly £400 per ton, and although the average price of the three was brought down to £375, that was a very large figure. One rather unfortunate result of the exaggerated reports was that they caused the French Navy to build ships of over 26,000 tons in order to counter them with a comfortable margin in hand.

When it was first proposed to lay them down there was a great discussion in German naval circles as to the type which would be best for their naval needs, the ideas varying from a slow, coast defence vessel mounting 14-in. guns to an adaptation of the *Washington* cruiser type. Whatever was done, the displacement was strictly limited to 10,000 tons, which demanded extreme lightness in every feature.

The present Grand Admiral Erich Raeder, the head of the German Navy, was very largely responsible for their design and the influence of his two pet policies is to be seen in them. For one thing, he is an enthusiast on surface raiders against commerce. As they were completed the three ships are particularly well adapted for both purposes and the fact that only two of them are known to have been sent out against commerce suggests the possibility of the third being held for coastal raids, although there are of course many other functions which she might fulfil in home waters. The three ships are the *Deutschland*, launched in 1931, the *Admiral Scheer*, launched in 1933 after her construction had been delayed for twelve months owing to the Reichstag refusing to vote the necessary money, and the *Admiral Graf Spee*, launched in 1934.

One of the most interesting features of their design lay in the fact that they were the first big warships in the world to be driven by Diesel engines, 54,000 brake horse power on twin screws being designed to give a speed of 26 knots, although, like all other Diesel installations, they were capable of taking a big overload, at least 20 per cent. The *Deutschland* is reported to have done 27 knots on trial but this is not official.

Under the standard system of measuring displacement the weight of bunkers is not reckoned, so that these ships can stow 1,200 tons of oil fuel in their tanks, enough for 2,000 sea miles at full speed and, as the horse power rises rapidly with the last few knots, no fewer than 10,000 miles at their cruising speed of 20 knots. Engineers are still wondering whether the principle of multiple engines generally working at reduced cruising speed will lead to an uneven distribution of wear which will cause trouble when they are all linked up for the ship to be driven "all out."

The main and auxiliary engines had to be cut down in weight just as much as the hull.

Their armament is also interesting, six 11-in. guns mounted in two turrets forward and aft, the triple mounting being necessary to save weight but involving a big risk from a single shell or salvo. They are of an entirely new type evolved by Messrs. Krupp, and although it is absurd to claim that they are equal to the British 15-in. guns, as has been done, they are credited with being excellent high-velocity weapons firing a shell of 670 lb. weight and being given an elevation of 60 degs. for a range of 30,000 yards.

This secondary battery consists of eight 5·9-in. guns, 50 calibres in length, firing a shell weighing rather more than 100 lb. and being specially designed for use against torpedo attack. They are mounted in single gunhouses grouped amidships, the superstructure being cut away to permit two of them to be fired straight forward and two of them straight astern. In addition there are six 4·1-in. anti-aircraft guns in double mountings, one on either side amidships close to the 5·9-in. guns, which they can assist against torpedo craft, and one on the keel line on the after superstructure. Eight 3-pounder anti-aircrafts are on double mountings alongside the bridge and on the after superstructure, and ten anti-aircraft machine-guns are also carried.

Finally there are eight 21-in. torpedo tubes in quadruple mountings, protected by thin armour, on either side of the open quarter-deck. The mounting of so many tubes at a time when most navies were abandoning them for big ships, and when every ton counted, aroused a good deal of comment.

Each ship is fitted with two seaplanes, and one of these has already been used against the merchant ship *Clement* which the *Deutschland* sank in the South Atlantic.

Like the machinery, the armour protection was also the subject of innumerable laudatory reports when the ships were new, but actually it proved to be very light and not much more than many of the *Washington* type cruisers, which are derisively called "tin-clads" on account of their poor protection.

The greatest saving, about 550 tons in all, of which about 500 were in the hull, was obtained by using electric welding instead of riveting, the *Deutschland* being the first big ship in which this was done. When these ships were on active service during the Spanish Civil War, however, and had to face heavy seas, there was an alarming tendency for them to crack a number of hull plates, not at the weld as might be expected but parallel to it and a few inches away.

Considering their size their accommodation is very roomy, but each ship carries a crew of no fewer than 926 officers and men in peace-time—probably somewhere between 1,100 and 1,200 in war-time according to German policy—and such a large complement must be very cramped indeed.

Frank C. Bowen

BRITAIN'S STRONGHOLD IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

The Boom Defence to the Harbour where the Big Ships Lie

THE BOOM IS UP: IN TIMES OF EMERGENCY A DEFENCE BOOM IS ALWAYS LAID ACROSS THE ENTRANCE TO THE HARBOUR AT MALTA AS A PROTECTION FOR THE BIG SHIPS AGAINST SUBMARINES

MALTA HARBOUR IS FREQUENTLY FILLED WITH BIG BRITISH WARSHIPS: IT IS BRITAIN'S CHIEF NAVAL BASE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN, AND DEPENDS ALMOST ENTIRELY ON THE NAVY FOR ITS VERY EXISTENCE

THE STRADA REALE, THE MAIN STREET OF VALETTA, WHICH IS THE CHIEF TOWN OF THE ISLAND

Malta is the chief of the little group of islands forming the important British naval base commanding the route to the Suez Canal. It marks the western limit to the zone now being patrolled by British warships in the eastern Mediterranean. The island group became part of the British Empire by the Treaty of Paris (1814), 15 years after Nelson had captured it from the French. Napoleon himself had taken it from the famous Crusading Order of the Knights of St. John who, for 250 years, had paid a falcon each year to Spain for the privilege of governing the island. Malta has a fine natural harbour and grim fortifications, and British warships are continually in port

WHERE THE BIG SHIPS REFIT AND THE CENTRE OF BRITISH NAVAL ACTIVITY— THE DOCKYARD CREEK AT GRAND HARBOUR, MALTA. *Below*—A MILITARY OCCASION AT MALTA, SHOWING WARSHIPS IN THE BACKGROUND. NOTE ALSO THE TYPICAL NATIVE BOATS

HOW A GERMAN U-BOAT SURRENDERED

Crippled by Depth-charges, the Submarine just Manages to Surface in Time to Allow the Crew to be Rescued by the Waiting Destroyers

FROM A DRAWING MADE FOR "THE SPHERE" BY MONTAGUE DAWSON

The picture by Mr. Montague Dawson reproduced above is based on an Admiralty account of the actual capture of a German U-boat's crew. A flag suddenly hoisted by one of the questing British destroyers was the warning that the submarine had been located. The remorseless hunt began. Depth-charge after depth-charge was dropped or projected from the throwers—not haphazard, but according to schemes invented and tried out long before the war.

Half a mile astern of one of the destroyers the conning tower and long hull of a submarine suddenly broke surface, bow first, in a swirl of water. The U-boat's stern was still under water when her conning tower lid opened and men started to tumble up on deck. Some could be seen leaping overboard. Others were holding up their hands. Her bows started to lift as the stern slowly went under. Destroyers approached, stopped. Boats were lowered. They rescued the entire crew.

The U-boat men described what had happened inside the submarine. The first charge to explode near her made her leak. There came a short respite during which the propeller sounds could be heard receding and left men wondering whether the hunters had given up the chase. Vain hope, unseen, impalpable fingers were soon groping again beneath the waters. The propeller sounds became louder again, then more depth-charges—close, frightfully close.

That second attack put out lights, shattered delicate instruments and caused worse flooding. Soon the U-boat's stern was full of water, which came spurting in the pipes and rivet holes in the bulkhead. She developed a heavy list. More water started to seep into the interior through the damaged conning tower. The compressed air was leaking. There was only enough pressure left to blow the tanks and come to the surface. Five minutes later the U-boat flung her nose in the air and plunged stern first to the bottom

THE WOMEN CARRY ON . . .

The Land Girls of Essex Learn Their Jobs

A KEEN QUESTION DURING A LECTURE ON THE PLOUGH: The instructor gives a practical reply

TRYING THEIR HAND AT IT: One of the most difficult of routine jobs on the farm—scything the long and rough grass

FROM THE TRACTOR CENTRE: A happy land girl masters the unwieldy vehicle

FOUR PRETTY LAND GIRLS taking eggs and firewood back to the farm buildings

As in the Great War, there has been no lack of response to the appeal for women land workers to carry on producing our food whilst the men are fighting. The Women's Land Army has been inundated with eager recruits, who are being scattered all over the country on farms, doing useful work whilst learning their new jobs. Most of them are girls who previously had been engaged in offices, shops and factories. These pictures were taken in Essex, where many recruits have already been fully trained, and many more are undergoing instruction.

The girls are first taken to a centre to learn tractor driving and the maintenance of the machines. Although none have had previous experience, all are exceptionally keen and are making great progress. After a week of learning how to use the tractor for harrowing, ploughing and other routine operations, the girls are sent to farms in different parts of the country, working whilst they learn to coax the maximum of production from the earth. All the farmers to whom these girls have been sent have reported favourably on their keenness and their willingness to work.

DOBBIN STANDS PATIENTLY AS A GIRL PREPARES HIM FOR THE DAY'S WORK

THIS GIRL GOT RIGHT AMONGST THE PIGS TO FEED THEM

IN THE LAND OF THE BLUE DEVILS

Down in the Far Corner of France Where Strasbourg Has Been Evacuated by Its French Alsatians

By HARRY J. GREENWALL

WINTER as well as war has come again to Alsace. The Rhine has risen a good foot; the Vosges are snow-crested ridges, with pine-covered slopes, but the trees are in many cases mangled stumps. There is an eerie stillness in the air; it is as if a whole country was standing breathlessly on tip-toe waiting for something to happen. The two-months-old war has taught civilians as well as soldiers that war is something mystical; it contains something more than may be found in text books, but strange as the war has proved itself, nowhere is it stranger than in the province of Alsace, a land of 2,000,000 people which waited nearly fifty years to be changed from German to French. Now Alsace stands denuded of its civilian population: an armoured plate in a chain of armour.

Artists have familiarised us with the festooned landscape of Alsace: the Hans Andersen-looking houses, with storks perched on the roofs; the pretty blonde girls, with blue eyes, wearing story-book dresses and huge black bows on their heads. The men with their wide-brimmed hats, and their Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes, smoking their porcelain pipes. The picture has changed. It is as if some new artist has drawn a picture of the landscape, but has left out the figures. The storks have flown away, as they always do at this time of year. They may be met with in North Africa; I have seen them myself perched majestically around the Sultan's Palace at Fez. But the storks will be back in the spring. The Alsatians will be back when the war is over.

It is doubtful whether there has ever been such a stupendous evacuation of a people since Biblical times. Hundreds and hundreds of trains removed the Alsatians from their homes so close to Germany and took them hundreds of miles away. Thousands of them are to be met with in south-west France, in Perigord, the home of the truffle and specially-produced goose liver. Alsace, and more particularly the Strasbourg region of Alsace, is also world-noted for its production of *pâté de foie gras*, the rival school to Perigord. The removal of so many thousands of Alsatians from the goose liver country which became French twenty-one years ago to the famed French centre has prompted one witty French journalist to suggest that at last a controversy, respecting the right way to prepare *pâté de foie de l'oie*, which has lasted since the end of the eighteenth century, may at last be settled.

But by no means the whole of the Alsatian population has gone to Perigord; thousands and thousands are to be met with in the very centre of France, as well as in many other districts. The University of Strasbourg has departed for one city, the Chamber of Commerce for another, and the Palace of Justice for yet a third.

It was during the Munich "crisis" that the Alsatians learned for the first time that in the event of war they would be evacuated. They lived on, hoping; hoping they would not have to leave their beloved vineyards, which they did, just as the grapes were ripe; hoping they would not have to abandon the potash mines, the textile factories, and all the other riches which make up the sum total of this rich land. But, "when you've gotta go, you've gotta go," as they say in the States. War is no hand-maiden to housewifery.

The stripping bare of Strasbourg may be seen by anyone permitted to walk to-day in this lovely city. But there may also be seen something else, something which plainly shows the soul-moving humanity of the French. The trite saying of all being fair in love and war is usually illustrated by the requisitioning of public buildings, and the billeting of troops on civilians. That holds true in every province of France these days, with one exception — Alsace.

Not only is no article of furniture disturbed, but no building, be it a public one or a private dwelling, has been touched. Furthermore, special patrols are constantly on their rounds, night and day, to see that the *consigne* is respected. Moreover, the streets are swept and watered when necessary by the Army. If any burgher of Strasbourg mayhap obtains permission to return to his city to fetch some forgotten article, he will simply have to put his latch key in the lock and enter a home which he will find just as he left it.

Yet it is still nothing but the shell of Strasbourg. There is a deathly silence broken only by the distant booming of artillery; there are no omnibuses or trams, no taxicabs, and no vehicles of any sort other than the military. The Opera House exhibits the bill of its last performance which happened to be Wagner's *Tannhauser*.

Boot shops, cycle shops, milliners' shops have goods for sale but no salespeople to sell them. Cakes and sweets in their respective shops have a sickly look. The tulips, carnations, and other flowers in the florists have long since faded. The newspaper kiosks are stocked with newspapers carrying exciting news of the dead days before the war; news, it seems, of another epoch. The antique shops have a look of permanency about them, but Strasbourg is a sleeping city waiting for a Fairy Prince to wake it.

The famous Cathedral of Strasbourg is so prepared for war that at first glance it seems as if war might have already smote it. With the loss of its stained-glass windows, removed, like the Alsatians, to places of safety, the cathedral has lost its mystic light, as well as its pictures and sacred objects and even its religious atmosphere. The nave and its marvellous arches are no longer aisles of piety. It is a house forsaken.

I have chosen to call this dispatch the Land of the Blue Devils, although I am aware that so far I have not introduced the Devils into this writing, but they are all around me—waiting. It was their fathers who did most to making Alsace French again, and the Chasseurs Alpins, known from one end of France to another as the "Blue Devils," are ready to see to it that Alsace remains French, despite the words painted in black on white linen banners and exhibited in the German lines, a short walk from Strasbourg.

Not only the banners, but the motor lorries with the loud-speakers try to persuade the Blue Devils and the other French troops that Adolf Hitler has nothing to ask from France; that he accepts the ceding of Alsace to France, etc., etc., etc., so before we walk together to the Front, where Germans face the French at a distance not much farther than 180 yards, let us quickly review what has happened in Alsace since that sunny autumn afternoon when Georges Clemenceau drove into the Place Kleber in Strasbourg and looking at the milling cheering throng, exclaimed aloud: "The plebiscite has already been held."

Opposite Strasbourg is the German city of Kehl, where guns are trained on the evacuated capital of Alsace. After Munich the name of the Rue de la Liberté was changed to Rue Daladier, but twenty-one years ago it was the Kaiser Friedrichstrasse. There you have history at a street corner, but behind such a transformation scene you find a group known as the Autonomists operating.

Despite Hitler's bluff on the Rhine to-day, the Autonomists were merely German-operated puppets, with Berlin pulling the strings. The Strasbourg Führer was a man named Dr. Bickler who had his headquarters in the house where Göethe wrote *Poetry and Truth*. Bickler distributed neither, but he sent out thousands of brochures and booklets advocating autonomy for Alsace. Yet this so-called autonomy had a curious ring about it. When they met, these Alsatian Hitlerites had to raise their right arms à la Hitler and exclaim "Free people! In our own land!"

They were, of course, trying to fly the Swastika over Alsace, and their cunning was typically Hitlerian. They corresponded one with the other in secret code and used the personal columns in the local newspapers to summon meetings in secret. Some months before the war the local police in Strasbourg swooped, and would have made a big killing but for the fact that the Herr Doktor had got wind of the police raid and was able to burn a number of incriminating letters and documents but, nevertheless, the police found a list containing 2,500 names and a number of arm-bands which were to be used when Der Tag dawned.

I will not bother you with what went on in Alsace during the days before the Munich Pact, but since then, when as you will recall the French Government arranged to remove the Alsatians from the potential war zone, strange things have happened. On an average day about 5,000 Germans came across the Kehl Bridge into Strasbourg, and a good many of them brought German propaganda with them. One of the things Hitler tried to wage in Alsace was an anti-Semitic campaign, which was a ghastly failure. Nevertheless, the Nazis subsidised two anti-Semitic newspapers in Alsace and published a list of so-called "pure Aryan shops" at which Alsatians were supposed to do their shopping. The Autonomists used a café called the *Dicke Maria* (Fat Maria) for their meetings.

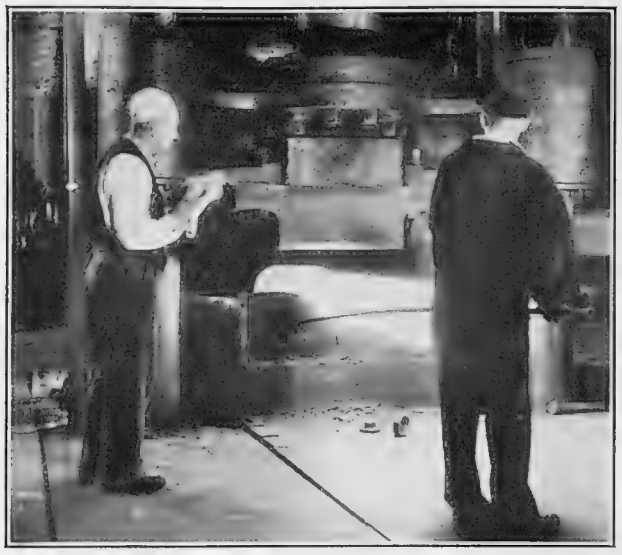
Many people, including some visiting English politicians, used to wonder why France "did nothing about the German propaganda in Alsace," but, of course, they did not know that docketed away in the appropriate Ministries in Paris were detailed plans to smash the movement at the right moment and evacuate the population out of harm's way.

I said that Germans and French are within about 180 yards of one another, but in this strange war, is it not passing strange that this sector of the Front is one of the very quietest? Deep in their dug-outs the French soldiers are well within shouting distance of the Germans who for forty-seven years owned this land. The cavemen listening to the wireless (and grumbling at the programmes) or playing innumerable games of *manille* or *belotte* sometimes never see the snow-topped crest of the Vosges for days together. Facing one another across the swollen waters of the Rhine, French and Germans keep watch on it. The French have blown up the bridges which spanned the famous river; they are like farmers who when winter comes mend broken fences, but the French perforce have had to mend by destroying so that finer things shall not be destroyed.

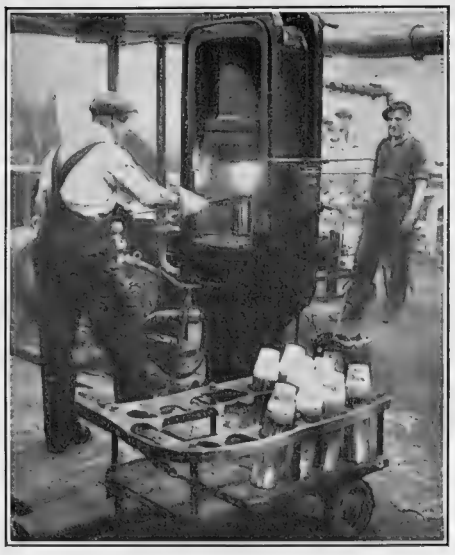
Way back in Strasbourg the empty streets echo to the tramp of the passing patrols, keeping guard on the houses and properties of citizens who twenty-one years ago were countrymen of the field-grey-coated soldiers who are on the opposite bank of the Rhine, so near but what worlds away.

ALLIED FLAGS OVER THE RHINE AT KEHL

Crossing the Rhine river at Strasbourg is the famous Kehl bridge, which connects the French and German cities. Here the guns of both sides are trained on the opposite bank ready for instant action. The bridge itself is strongly guarded on the French side by the strong point pictured above. It will be observed that the French tricolour and the British Union Jack here fly side by side



A pressure of 1,500 tons is employed by this huge machine for the forging of a jacket for a big gun



Shell heads being shaped at a converted munitions factory in the Midlands

The nearly finished shell being tested for size (note the workers' gas-masks ready for instant action!)

Vickers machine-guns in the making at a Royal Ordnance factory where shifts are now working day and night

IN A BRITISH MUNITIONS FACTORY

Personal Impressions During a Visit to Two Great Centres

Described by
NOEL THOMPSON

IT is a curious fact that in this most peculiar war no one on either side knows how much more ammunition will be needed than in the last war. Everyone knows that an increase will be necessary. Apart from the Bren gun, machine-guns have multiplied by twenty, quick-firing anti-aircraft guns by the hundred, and general speed of fire of heavy guns by an unprintable quantity.

Add to this the aircraft guns, of which a single fighter carries eight, firing about 10,000 rounds a minute between them, and you reach a figure which can only be called *x*. In the last war the daily peak fire was 12,600 tons of ammunition, but who can tell whether a major battle calling for that amount will ever again occur?

All of which is a prelude to observations I have made during tours of two of our ordnance factories. The Ministry of Supply gave me every opportunity to pry and ask questions, and every chance of obtaining a reply, with the sole stipulation that figures must be restrained for fear of giving valuable information to the enemy, and obviously the place names and the calibre of guns must be left out.

At the first building I approached, the spirit of the workers was clearly excellent. Barrels which had contained chemicals were labelled in chalk "Watney's Ales," and "Bass' Barley Wine." Immediately inside the door were half-pint bottles of—milk. In fact, milk is the chief drink in duty hours, as I found everywhere.

I was noting this when a huge piece of red hot metal whistled past my feet, it seemed only inches away. Actually it must have been about 2 ft. It was the first moulding of a large shell. All around were furnaces. Everything seemed red or white hot. Harmless-looking piles were probably only just less than red hot; white hot metal shapes were casually hooked out of furnaces and rolled across the floor. A moving railway carried more, straight from the fiery jaws, all shapes, sizes, weights. The men, asbestos-gloved, dealt with them as though they were trifles.

Past the first rough shaping and hollowing out to the pyrotechnic display which never fails to thrill, the Tropena converters, where the pig-iron becomes steel. Like a vast roman candle the stream of sparks flows out day and night from the vat which Bessemer invented, and the pure steel is made.

Then the gleaming silver shells from which writhe curling serpents of twisted parings as they are shaped and screwed for the fitting of bases and fuses, and the "waving" which grips the cases is administered.

A few steps and we are humbled in the presence of the monster guns in various stages of nudity. I try to close the breech of one of the smaller and manage with difficulty the first time, but with growing ease as balance and knack are acquired. Beautiful bit of work. The rifling is fascinating. And then I saw a real monster naval gun. Slowly, irresistibly, it was being ground inside to 1/5,000th of an inch along its huge length. The speed is invariable, for its accuracy depends on it.

Pressing the barrels of the guns is a work of art. One big gun in peace-time may take a year to complete. I watched the work on a medium gun barrel; the great red hot solid piece of steel which squeezed under the pressure of 1,500 tons like cheese into its first rough circular shape.

Up above, a man worked a crane from a gantry, moving the mass a few inches this way and that. On ground level a man worked the press as though it were a light smoothing iron, while three colleagues silently signalled and assisted.

"Fine team work, that," I commented to my guide as the long task went on. I was more correct than I knew. The five men *are* a team. They always work together, know every move, and get paid by team work, sharing what they earn

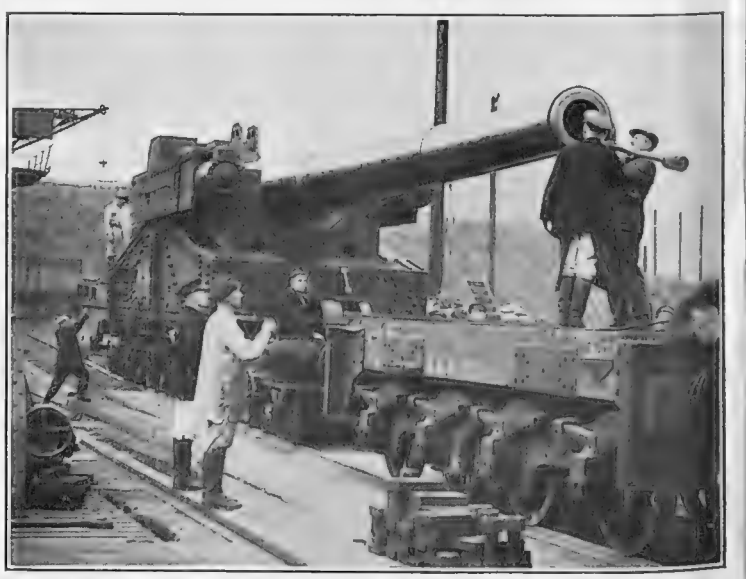
The small arms ammunition is mass-produced but with the most infinite care. Every cartridge and bullet is tested through at least nine processes, and one machine alone tests the finished, but uncharged, product in nine ways. Rejects amount to about 2 per cent.

After all that care it is surprising to go to the Inspection Department and find that every cartridge is again tested for length, thickness and weight on one machine, by hand for charge, percussion cap or any other fault, and given a final inspection again before being packed in bands, pouches, air-tight boxes, and sealed tins (ready for twelve years wait in the tropics if necessary). Every single round goes through this process, millions a week, to prevent any mistake or fault.

In this department, helping with the sorting and packing, are rows of young boys. Their quick hands can do thick packing and sorting work

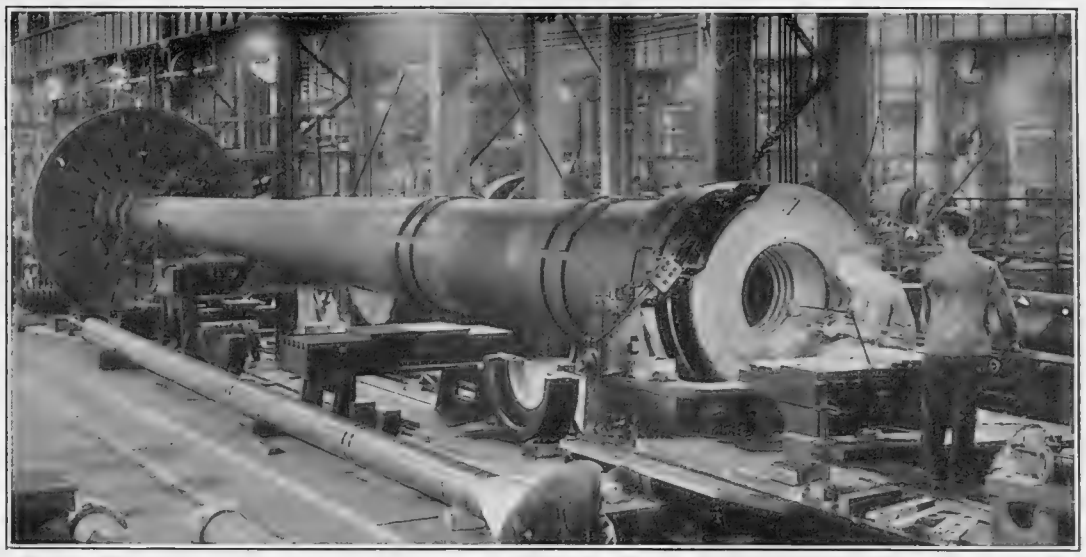
Bren guns being assembled and finished. Large numbers of these are now being supplied to various branches of the Forces

Bren guns being barrel-tested. The greatest care is exercised to ensure the absolute straightness of the barrels of these guns



After completion in the shops the big naval guns are all taken to the proof butts for their final and very comprehensive tests

Working on shell cases in the milling shop, where stocks are being accumulated for future use



The barrel of a 16-in. naval gun being gouged after boring; on the accuracy of this process—which calls for the greatest precision—the whole future effectiveness of the gun depends

easily, though some are little more than children in appearance. They are as cheerful as though they are handling marbles—and just as safe.

Last visit here was to a great naval gun which was being "proofed" at the butts. Mounted on a railway undercarriage, with a slope uphill behind to take the recoil, it was pointed at 30 feet of packed sand. To prevent too great penetration a blunt-nosed shell is used. First a "warmer," then a proof round, using a greater charge than in actual service in order to test pressure inside the gun. Then five service rounds to test performance. Every reaction is tested electrically.

"Stand by," comes the call, and we take cover nervously, having seen three sacks of cordite, weighing a hundredweight each, put in as charge. We dutifully open our mouths and bite a pencil, as well as hold our ears. Surprisingly the noise is not too deafening, but the blast, even from fifty yards, rocks us on our heels.

More than half a ton of steel has hurtled into the sand 200 yards away, but I was more interested in the timing apparatus, which, before the reloading, I went to inspect. Wooden frames about three feet wide are criss-crossed with wire. To my amazement the leviathan has been aimed through this target, and another farther on, breaking the wires, and recording the exact time, and hence the velocity, when the shell broke the contacting wires. It seems incredible when the velocity varies between 340 and 2,050 m.p.h., but as they can photograph the shell in flight with an exposure of 1/1,000,000th part of a second, I must believe them. Even more amazing that the aiming of the gun is done by a man on a ladder propped against the muzzle, using a set square! It looked like Heath Robinson at work.

My next visit was to a factory making the smaller types of guns: Bren guns, which I was most anxious to see, machine-guns, anti-tank guns and rifles. Let me skim through a few points first. The butts of these guns, and in the case of rifles the stocks also, are of walnut. English walnut hardly exists, so the supplies come from the Continent and from America. The wood is hard and light, which are the qualities required, but the butts are not varnished.

I watched first the turning of revolver grips, much better than of old, with a cross pattern from left to right which gives a lovely feel. An eighty-year-old machine is turning out rifle stocks as smoothly as ever. A German machine makes the gun locks with superb efficiency, if irony. I skimmed over the machine-guns to reach the Bren factory.

It is hard to describe a death-dealing weapon as a beautiful piece of work, but that is the only description. The whole made from solid steel, the blast furnaces and hammers of vast power which rough-shape the barrel; the steel, at a ton a time, taken from the furnace and hardened in oil. Every time the steel, red hot, sinks, a flash of flame 20 ft. high rises, and every time it breaks surface again another great spurt of flame lights the whole building.

The Bren gun is made up of 3,500 processes, and every detail, every screw, every piece of metal is checked by hand, so that not one false piece, one false nut, can go into the construction and cause a fault which might take an hour or hours to discover.

We move on and study barrels, whether they are straight or not. The system of concentric circles, by which as you look down the barrel the circles are normal if the barrel is straight but out of line if there is any irregularity, used to take a man six months to learn. It has been simplified until three weeks' training will suffice, and the semi-skilled man knows where the fault lies. The shadow system took two years to learn. Now it takes three months, and we can rely on every barrel being straight now without a shadow of error.

The rifling goes in a family tradition. I saw a machine which has been working with absolute accuracy to within 3/1,000ths of an inch day and night since 1910, and the man working it was a family craftsman.

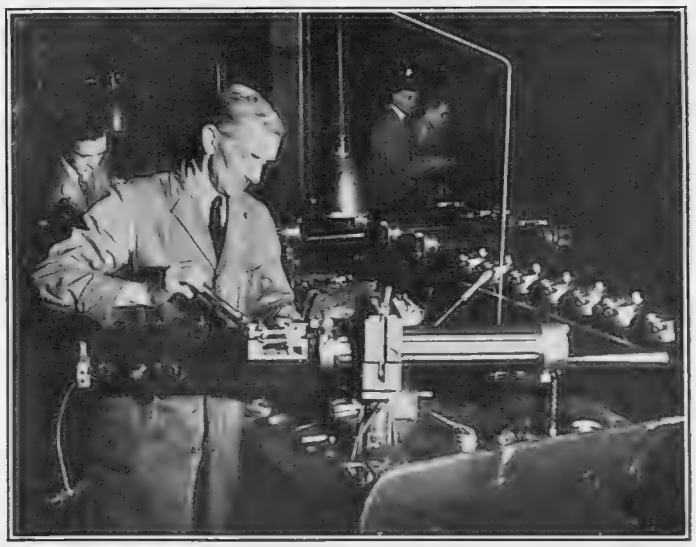
Up and down long lines I watched the Bren guns being produced. The machines are a marvel. The men working them, semi-skilled, are under skilled operators, the former paid on piece-work. Here I should say that the men and the Government are working hand in hand. I have mentioned the milk bottles I saw. These contain a third of a pint and cost a penny. Each shift is offered milk, and some 3,000 bottles are bought every twenty-four hours.

So at last to the testing of the Bren guns and rifles. Every single one is tested with more than any strain that is likely to be put on it. The Bren guns are fired into the ground at an angle of 80 deg., and then into the air at the same angle. The target on this occasion consists of old motor tyres, sand, wood and steel plating. The gun must fire individual shots and quick fire.

Its rate of fire is certainly higher than the official estimate. Normal supply of ammunition per gun is twenty-five cases of thirty cartridges each. And every gun has a second barrel interchangeable in 5 secs. What is more, the whole gun can be taken down and re-assembled by an expert, whom I saw and timed, in 45 secs.

I also saw spiders' webs, collected in September, stored for markings on telescopic sights. When I heard of this I thought it was a tall story. But it is true, and scientists at the factory actually do collect and use them. One man even claimed that these webs had been split to make them even finer than the 4/1,000ths of an inch they normally are. I looked through a sight on which they had been placed as the expert murmured in my ear, "There is nothing to beat them."

The first shell is fired, but with a greater charge than in actual service in order to test the pressure inside the gun



Light anti-aircraft guns for the Navy being assembled in a Government small arms factory

The common, or garden, rifle being assembled—a work which calls for the greatest manual proficiency and precision

Pistols and revolvers for various purposes are also made in large numbers in the Government's Ordnance Factories

Hundreds and hundreds of officials in the Postal Censorship Department carrying out their examinations

Even typists are "pooled" these days. A section of the department which works for the whole Censorship Office

The packets, having been examined, are ready for delivery

HOW THE POSTAL CENSORS WORK.—These pictures come from one of the busiest of all war-time departments, the Postal Censorship Office—in the north of England. Here officials, with a knowledge of scores of languages between them, carry out their examinations of Britain's post-bag daily. One of the censors, a university professor, has a command of twenty languages and a working knowledge of many others: other censors have five and six languages at their command. The work here is unceasing night and day, and hundreds of thousands of letters are dealt with weekly

BOOKS FOR THE TROOPS To help pass the time till Hitler makes up his mind, the troops are being well supplied with varied literature. Some thousands of books are finding their way to the War Office Comforts Department at Reading, which acts as a clearing house for the necessary literary material

The World of Books—By Vernon Fane

THE BIOGRAPHY OF A POET

An Appreciative Study of the Life of Edward Thomas; and Other New Works

NEARLY twenty-five years ago, and shortly before his death at Arras, a poet wrote:

"But with the best and meanest Englishman
I am one in crying, God save England, lest
We lose what never slaves and cattle blessed.
The ages made her that made us from dust;
She is all we know and live by, and we trust
She is good and must endure, loving her so."

That man was Edward Thomas, who now holds his small but secure place in the company of English poets, and who, until the age of thirty-six, had not written a poem. He had married while still at Oxford, and from that time till the beginning of the last war had made a precarious and intolerably hard living as a literary hack, writing whole guide books on commission for a few pounds, and filling in with such free-lance work as he could get accepted.

In this time he met W. H. Hudson, and later the poet Robert Frost, in whom he found a great affinity of thought. From 1915 to the time of his death he found the greatest happiness in writing poetry himself, and that brief eight months is responsible for all his enduring work. It seems extraordinary to us now, that almost all a man's life may pass before he discovered his vital talent and the means of expressing it.

From his biography by Mr. John Moore, **THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF EDWARD THOMAS** (Heinemann. 15s.), one gets some idea of the poetic spirit which was always his, and which so ill became the drudgery of his everyday life. Mr. Moore's biography is excellent, clear and at the same time subtle in its appreciations.

It was said the other day by a writer of sensibility that the period that seems most remote to us now is the span of fifteen years before the last war, and indeed they do seem to belong to a life that is irretrievably lost, though a book I have been reading this week has recalled a still more distant time and a more utterly remote style of living.

In 1760, the English court was not yet suffering from the dullness and economy which George III's German queen was to impose on it, and was still a glittering, lively meeting place, well worthy of Horace Walpole's observation. In this court a girl of sixteen, the sister of the young Duke of Richmond, was the reigning belle. Lady Sarah Lennox was reputed to have turned the head of the King himself, and to have more beaux and supplicants than any of the other ladies. Her prospects were brilliant, and everybody expected a great and possibly a spectacular marriage for her.

LADY SARAH (Peter Davies. 8s. 6d.) is the story of her career and of the unremarkable marriage she actually made to a good-natured squire from the Newmarket country, who rated his wife as the most satisfactory of his possessions, but spent far more time and energy in debating the future of his brood mares.

To that kindly indifference, however, the lady's high spirits were proof, and after some years of country life she eloped with her cousin, Lord William Gordon, and had a baby by him. Later they parted, and in middle age she married for the second time a good, quiet man, by whom she had several sons. Miss Magdalen King-Hall's book is a novel rather than strict biography, but it purports to be founded entirely on fact, and it certainly gives one of the most credible and vivid pictures of pre-Regency England that I remember reading.

It is easy to romanticise this period, particularly if one is writing of its great figures, but Miss King-Hall does something more intelligent than that; she makes the reader interested in the period, and shows him something of its strange mixture of brutality and elegance.

CHRIST IN CONCRETE (Gollancz. 7s. 6d.) has proved, I understand, a success in America. It is a staccato and almost hysterical novel of a part of the Italian colony in New York, that part in which most of the men are masons and bricklayers. Its author, Mr. Pietro di Donato, writes with the greatest urgency, which might be confused with strength. His sentences seem to bubble out, piling sensation on sensation and bewildering the reader with words, and, still more, with dots.

For this is one of those books in which the author has not felt himself bound by the conventions, either of the dictionary or of punctuation. In his word inventions he has admirable models to follow; his overworking of the dots and the dashes has less to commend it. But what is distressing about this book, which has undeniable vitality and power, is the sheer horror in its descriptions of physical accidents, of maiming, and gangrene and the more horrific forms of slow death.

Mr. A. G. Macdonell's new book is genuine escape literature, that phenomenon of which we hear so much and read so little. In **FLIGHT FROM A LADY** (Macmillan. 7s. 6d.) the hero charters an aeroplane from a Dutch air company and, on page one, is flying down the Thames on his way south and east, to the farthest spot from the lady in question.

After a fortnight of almost continuous flying and quite continuous letter-writing he has reached Java, and having at each stage reiterated his passionate relief at being free and alone, now proceeds with one fatal cablegram on the last page to attach himself more firmly than ever to the lady's chains. "Adieu and farewell to you," he writes with one breath, and with the very next, "Meet me Savoy Grill Saturday night eleven-thirty." And this from the very ends of the earth, insularly speaking.

In the meantime, though, between his escape and his recapture, a book has grown from his travel letters, written in his aeroplane for the most part, and reflecting on the inconstancy and beauty of women, the battle of Thermopylae and the social flair of Mr. Michael Arlen. Every place flown over provides Mr. Macdonell's hero with food for reverie and, quite often, for indignation.

Flying over the Mediterranean his anger turns against some of the more renowned French generals. Over the "wine-coloured sea of the Hellenes" Lord Baldwin and the League come under acid review, and sixteen thousand feet above the Trans-Jordanian desert Newton's law receives serious consideration. There is a lot of good sense, and a lot that is very amusing in this book which is, of course, dedicated to The Lady.

The White Paper on the Nazi treatment of political prisoners and conditions in concentration camps is a best seller. Here is a book which every purchaser of that document should read, for it throws fresh light on the terror which can enmesh hapless and innocent citizens under a system which allows, and even encourages, children to denounce their own parents.

GESTAPO TRIAL (Gollancz. 7s. 6d.), by Jan Petersen, is a grim and terrible story in which, for obvious reasons, the names of the characters have been changed though none of the incidents is imaginary. Briefly it concerns the action of a sergeant of police who, in a fit of jealousy, denounces as political suspects a perfectly innocent girl and an equally inoffensive man who was paying her some attention.

It so happened that a certain inspector of the Secret Police needed a prize capture to impress his chiefs. The sergeant's report is the very thing. The Gestapo bring them in. The resultant story is one of horrible torturings in the dreaded Gestapo prison cells and of the frenzied attempts of the inspector to build up a case upon nothing at all. More and more innocent people become involved before the whole miserable fabric of the case breaks down through the sergeant's confession. But not before several lives have been broken in the process and a mockery of a trial gone through.

Every word rings true, and the system stands revealed in all its bestial horror.

Sir Seymour Hicks, who is, I understand, somewhere on a French stage at the moment, has written, for him, an unusual book; a series of accounts of famous trials which he has witnessed at the Old Bailey. **NOT GUILTY, M'LORD** (Cassell. 10s. 6d.) covers the trials of Crippen, of Oscar Wilde, of Horatio Bottomley, of "Brides in the Bath" Smith, Seddon and Steinie Morrison, and does Sir Seymour's acute observation great justice.

Very often a newspaper will send two or more reporters to an important trial, one to take down the word-for-word evidence and the counsels' speeches, the others to write "atmosphere" stories on anything that strikes them about the proceedings. These human interest stories occupy a large space in the current popular papers, and it occurs to me that their editors have been missing a positively platinum opportunity in not signing up Sir Seymour, with all his wit and humanity and quickness and perception, to be one of their reporters on the big trials.

Books Received.—GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN.—NOT AT HOME. By Parr Cooper. 8s. 6d. A. & C. BLACK.—GREAT FLIGHTS. By E. Colston Shepherd. Illustrated. 7s. 6d. POLAR EXPLORATION. By Andrew Croft. Illustrated. 7s. 6d. BLACKIE.—SIR ISAAC NEWTON. By John Dougall. Illustrated. 2s. 6d. THE WEDNESDAY PONY. By Primrose Cumming. Illustrated by Stanley Lloyd. 5s. THE "GOLDEN HIND." By B. Webster Smith. 2s. 6d. THE LIFE AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF CAPTAIN JAMES COOK. By Surgeon Rear-Admiral John Reid Muir. Illustrated. 10s. 6d. THE BOOK CLUB.—MR. EMMANUEL. By Louis Golding. 2s. 6d. BURLEIGH PRESS.—DIAMONDS AND PEARLS. By "Junelius." 7s. 6d. CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS.—A PAINTER'S PILGRIMAGE THROUGH FIFTY YEARS. By A. S. Hartrick, R.W.S. Illustrated. 15s. CHAMBERS.—THE FUTURE OF SCOTLAND. By James A. Bowie. 7s. 6d. YEOMAN CALLING. By Christopher Turner. Illustrated. 7s. 6d. CHAPMAN & HALL.—THE SWEET OF THE YEAR. By H. J. Massingham. 7s. 6d. ENGLISH SPINSTER: A Portrait. By Esther Meynell. 8s. 6d. CHATTO & WINDUS. A MUSICAL CHAIR. By Compton Mackenzie. 7s. 6d.

HOLLAND PREPARES

Youths Train, New Torpedo Boats are Launched, Civil Air Defence Intensifies, and Trenches are Dug

TWO TORPEDO BOATS ARE LAUNCHED AT ROTTERDAM FOR THE DUTCH NAVY

While seeking not to appear in any way militant, the Dutch authorities have been taking precautions against eventualities. Here two additions to the Navy are taking the water; one destroyer has done so, and the vessel on the left is about to follow

THE NOT-EASILY-MOVED DUTCH CITIZEN GATHERS TO LEARN THE NEWS

On the left is the office of a Haarlem newspaper. Behind the group is the town hall

IN PICTURESQUE DELFT ONE COMES ACROSS SCENES LIKE THIS

Delft is full of ancient buildings telling of Holland's stirring history. The house of William the Silent is now the William of Orange Museum. Life outwardly proceeds as usual, but these boys in training give an index of underlying feelings

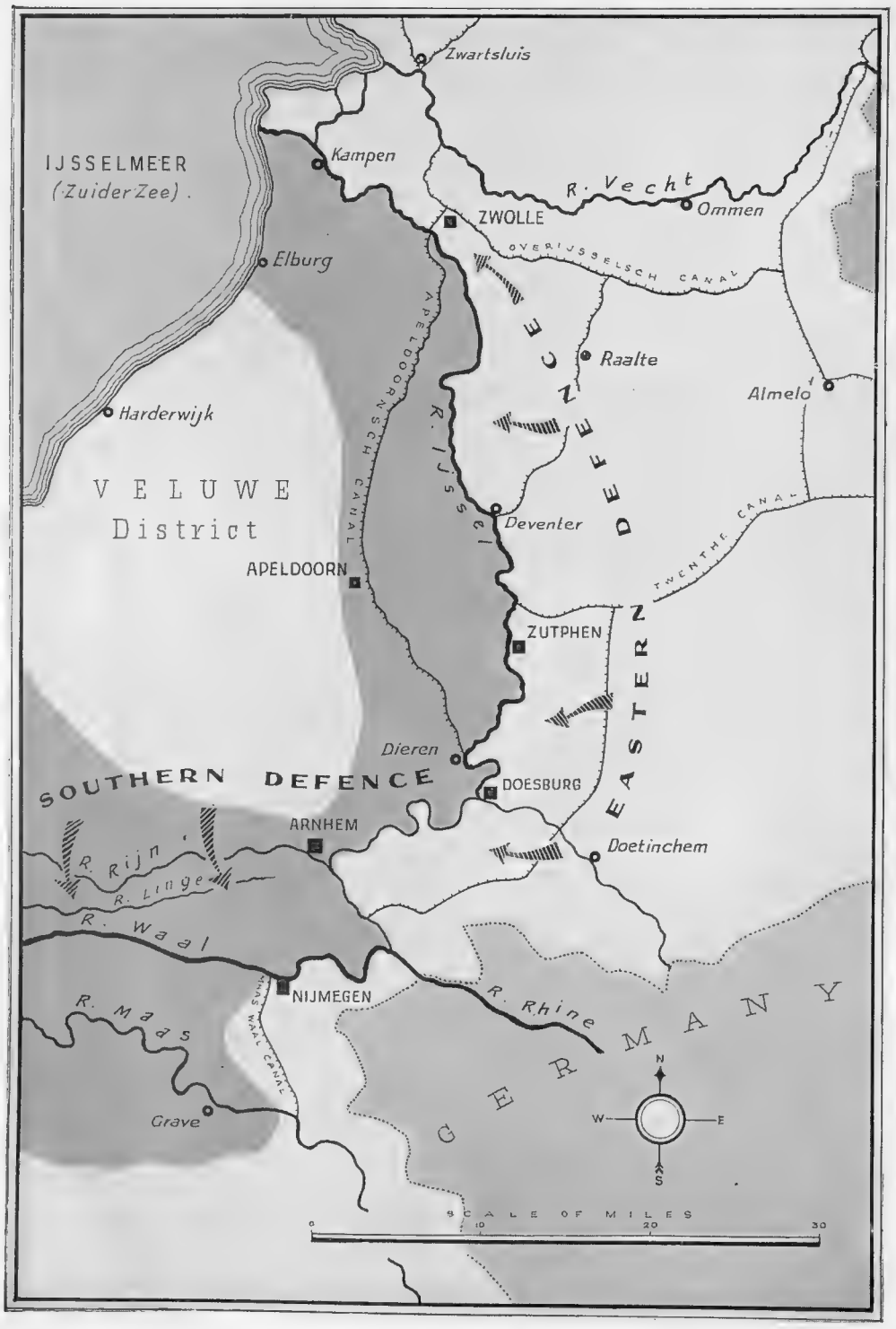
NEW TRENCHES HAVE BEEN CUT IN MANY DIRECTIONS

A wise precaution on the part of any nation, and much more so with the smaller ones, is the cutting of defence lines. Modern defence is strong, whereas attack is costly. *On left*—These members of the Civil Defence Guard are firemen. They are being inspected by Queen Wilhelmina

HOLLAND'S WATER

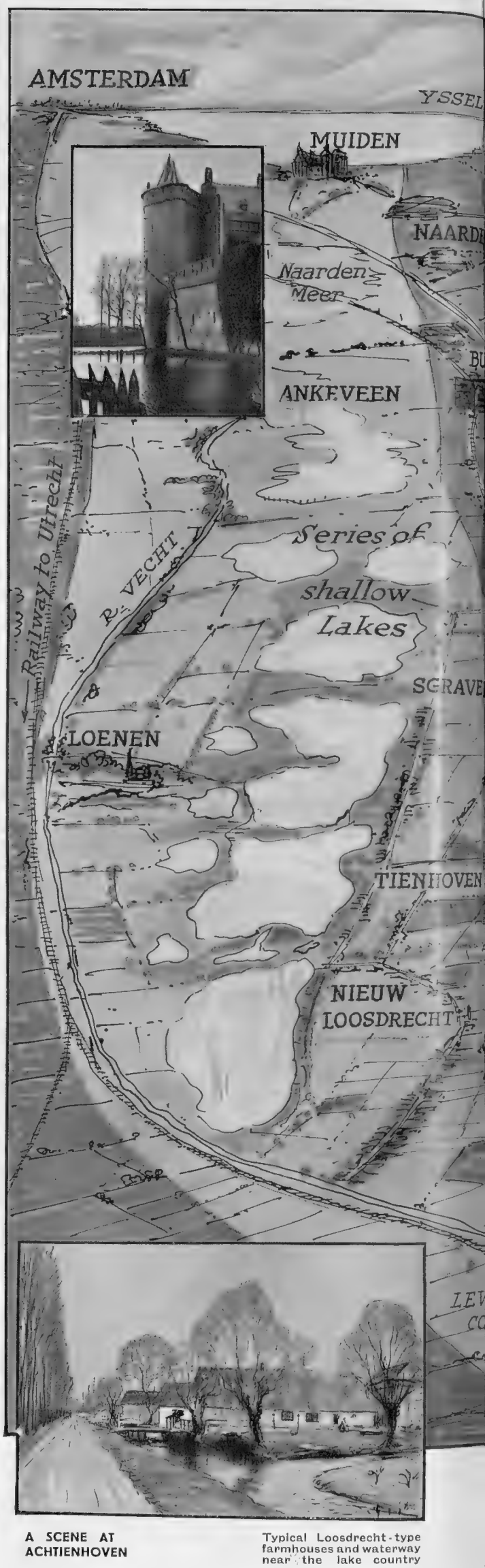
HOLLAND'S FIRST-LINE WATER BARRIER FOLLOWS THE WEST BANK OF THE YSSEL RIVER

This river flows into the Yssel Meer, as the now fresh-water Zuider Zee is called. Along the west bank northwards from Arnhem this polder land can be flooded for several miles in depth



THE REGION OF HOLLAND'S FIRST LINE OF RIVER DEFENCES—THE LINE OF THE YSSEL AND THE MAAS

This region lies many miles west of the Dutch frontier, for the eastern higher ground provinces cannot provide any water defence. To the south, the line of the Waal also provides a low-lying region capable of being flooded



A SCENE AT ACHTIENHOVEN

Typical Loosdrecht-type farmhouses and waterway near the lake country

The inset views include, above on left, the chateau of Muiden, and on right, the harbour of Spakenburg, Amersfoort gate and Utrecht

DEFENCE: How Three Areas can be Submerged at Will

THE TWO BANDS OF LOW-LYING TERRITORY WHICH CAN BE FLOODED IF NECESSARY. THEY ARE SHOWN LIGHT WITH THE BAND OF HEATH COUNTRY INTERVENING

Drawings by Percy Home

One area stretches from the old chateau of Muiden (it was here that the waters were let in during the invasion of the Netherlands by Louis XIV, who had his headquarters at Utrecht) southwards through a series of shallow lakes towards Utrecht. A band of higher heath country separates this area from the one to the east, where perfectly level polder country stretches south from Spakenburg towards Amersfoort with its beautiful watergate

LANDING STAGES ON ONE OF THE LOOSDRECHT LAKES IN THE SECOND DEFENCE AREA

The second and historic defence area of Holland includes the large group of lakes running south from the Yssel Meer towards Utrecht. They are nearly all centres for yachting

INNUMERABLE WATERWAYS EXIST IN THE AREA OF HOLLAND'S SECOND LINE OF DEFENCE

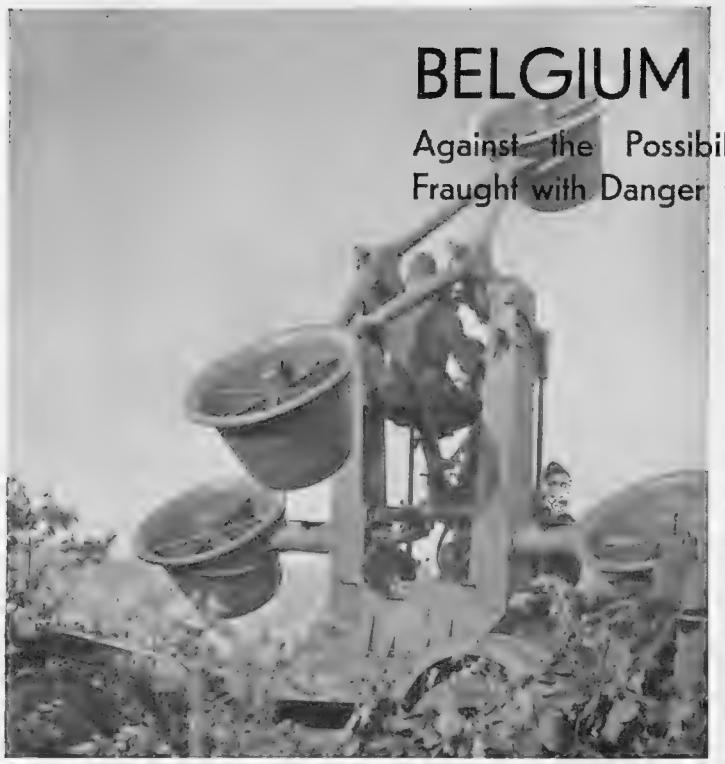
All through the villages of S'Graveland and the Loosdrecht country run waterways with which others at right angles connect. They run straight to the horizon in most cases

SOUTH OF THE YSSEL MEER THE POLDER LAND IS ABSOLUTELY FLAT FOR MILE UPON MILE

The villagers are passing along the road by the canal which from this eye-level is invisible. Great herds of cattle dot the pasture land. *Below*—A typical scene in Gooiland's CHAIN OF LAKES

BELGIUM PREPARES

Against the Possibilities of a Situation Fraught with Danger to the Smaller Nations



A BELGIAN SOUND LOCATOR ON A HIDDEN MOTOR CARRIAGE

THE ARDENNES CHASSEURS SWEAR TO HOLD THE FOREST COUNTRY

Belgium, like her Dutch neighbour, has experienced a period of tension, the Cabinet and the King discussing the situation at special sessions, and the British Ambassador, Sir Robert Clive, being received at the Foreign Ministry. The cost of the mobilisation, October 1, 1939, to December 31, 1940, is estimated to cost £37,500,000

THE BELGIAN QUEEN MOTHER INSPECTS THE BELGIAN AIR FORCE

It is from the air that the big threat to the smaller countries may come with menacing force

STEEL LAND DEFENCES OF BELGIUM

The frontier was last week closely watched. The road from Eupen to Aix was closed for a time. *Below*—An anti-aircraft gun in sandbagged redoubt

BELGIUM'S CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF INSPECTS FRONTIER DEFENCES

General Van den Berghe (holding map) pauses during his inspection of some roadside gun emplacements. Lieut.-General Denis, Minister for National Defence, has also been very active. A.R.P. messages from the Ministry of Public Instruction were broadcast to the public

WHEN THE ROADS AND RAILWAYS BREAK DOWN

High-Speed Air Transport for Military Purposes: What Has Been Done and What May Yet Be Done

"The War in the Air"
Described by
CHARLES G. GREY
(formerly Editor of *The Aeroplane*)

GENERAL HARINGTON in a recent article in this paper disclosed to the general public a fact which has naturally been known to soldiers for several years, namely that a mechanised division of any good army on the march takes up forty miles of road. That seems a terrible amount of country but in reckoning things of this sort the time factor comes in as well.

The pace of an army of horse, foot and guns used to be reckoned at two miles an hour for possibly eight hours a day. And the speed was governed by the marching power of the worst infantry unit in the brigade, division or what-not. Consequently, a foot-slogging army would take approximately three days to cover fifty miles, whereas the motorised division, given reasonably decent roads and not too much bombing and machine gunning on the way, would cover the distance in two hours.

When one is dealing with cavalry or mounted infantry one can put up the speed and decrease the road space quite a lot. And stories of some of the great cavalry raids in wars of the past make fantastic reading. Phil Sheridan's raids on the rear of the enemy army in the American Civil War, and Rennenkampf's famous raid with his Cossacks on the rear of the Japanese troops in Manchuria during the Russo-Japanese War, showed almost unbelievable endurance in men and horses. And now some people are wondering whether in open war aeroplanes and cavalry will not play a very important part.

Motor transport is all very well so long as the campaign takes place where there are plenty of roads, or where there is good hard going across country, as for example in the plains of Poland, and, still better, in the central plains of Russia. But even then motors cannot live on the country as horses can.

We have never had in this country a proper account of how when the German Army advanced into Austria both the road transport and the railways broke down, so that when Herr Hitler in his Staff car with a few escorting cars penetrated about fifty miles into Austria on the road to Vienna they found the whole of the mechanised troops stuck for lack of petrol.

The story, which I heard from a German officer, was that they managed to extract from the various vehicles round about just enough petrol to take the Führer and his escort into Vienna. Then they telegraphed back to the German Air Force and enough troops of the German Army were flown to Vienna to provide enough show of military force to give the proper tone to the proceedings.

Also we have not had yet the story of what really happened in the German attack on Poland when the whole of the mechanised troops and a great deal of the Air Force was immobilised for days because of lack of petrol. Again the roads and the railways broke down and the petrol supplies did not get through.

And just here is where air transport comes into its own. Some day and in due course we shall be told what our comparatively small fleet of air transport machines did during a certain period pretty soon after the declaration of war in September in the way of transporting specialist troops to France. Some of our big machines at which our critics in other countries, especially across the Atlantic, had been scoffing, saying that they had been designed with "built-in head-winds," and some of our very big newer aeroplanes which were not supposed to be good enough for the long distance journeys for which they had originally been designed, flew to and fro many times a day carrying two or three times the number of people they had originally been designed to carry—short hauls mean light loads of petrol and big pay-loads.

This I think, and I hope the Censor will allow it to be set down, was about the most effective display of troop-transport that the Army has ever had. You see, the R.A.F.'s first display of troop transport for the Army was rather disastrous. It happened in Egypt some ten years ago, when a very important Army Review was arranged to impress King Fuad. The Air Force asked to be allowed to take part and the Army lent them fifteen or twenty men to pack into the belly of one of those sausage-shaped twin-motor biplanes of the period which were called transport-bombers. The men emplaned, to use the official term, opposite the saluting base, and the machine took off. It flew round for about a quarter of an hour on a very hot and very bumpy day, and it landed with exquisite precision again precisely opposite the Royal Box. For some horrible minutes nothing happened. Then the door opened and one soldier crawled out, clad only in shirt and shorts, leaned against the side of the machine and continued to be violently ill. That is a true and authentic story which anybody who was in Egypt at the time will verify. Nobody could decide whether the laugh was against the R.A.F. or against the Army.

As against that, troops have been transported across the desert in Iraq to hold advanced posts, or to deal with a troublesome tribe, over and over again. On one occasion a whole battalion was flown from Egypt to Trans-Jordan. And on a still more historic occasion, a battalion was flown from Egypt to Cyprus to put down something which was very like a serious rebellion there. And there was the instance of the evacuation of women and children from the legations at Kabul, when King Amanullah became unpopular in Afghanistan. But the recent occasion was the first time that air transport has been used seriously in a first-class war.

The point of this argument is, what could be done by the proper organisation of high-speed air transport in moving reinforcements? Quite a long time ago I argued that if the Royal Air Force could persuade the British Army to take air transport seriously, so that Government money could be spent on producing the world's best troop transport aeroplanes, we should find ourselves automatically the owners of the world's finest air liners.

The qualities required in an aeroplane for troop-transport are precisely those which are required for an air liner. The aeroplane must carry the greatest possible number of human beings approximately in comfort at the highest possible speed with the greatest possible economy of fuel. And it must be able to get down slowly, so that if it has to land on an ordinary field or on an aerodrome that has been badly knocked about by bombing or shelling, it will not necessarily crash and burn up the troops on board.

One of the most deadly things about a war to any soldier who has had to make a living for himself in civil life is the appalling waste of time. In these days when clerks and workpeople alike are educated to understand that man-hours are the world's only real wealth, people do kick at spending days and days in trains that do about five or six miles an hour, or even mechanical transport which does perhaps twenty miles an hour, when they know that they could be transported at about 200 miles an hour and save the nation money doing it.

Naturally one would not expect air transport to carry the heavy armament of an army. The Russians have, in fact, transported tanks by air, by clamping them under the belly of one of their big four-motor air-liners, or bombers, and they have landed them without crashing either the tank or the aeroplane. But that, like their parachute troops, is largely display or eyewash or propaganda. The Russians always have had a fine sense of theatre.

But air transport properly developed for the needs of the Army would move troops with their ordinary equipment plus machine-guns and ammunition in large quantities at terrific speeds. There ought not to be much difficulty in making an aeroplane which would carry fifty men. We already carry thirty-five passengers in luxury. And the soldier expects a certain amount of discomfort in transport. An aeroplane to carry 100 men would not be a very difficult proposition for a good designer. That would mean ten aeroplanes per battalion at full strength, forty aeroplanes per brigade, or 120 aeroplanes per division, and one might throw in perhaps an extra machine for the General and his gilded Staff.

One may assume that so long as we are fighting in western Europe any time between the spring and summer equinoxes each machine could make three journeys a day, so actually one would only need forty machines to transport a division from here to let us say the Rhineland in a day.

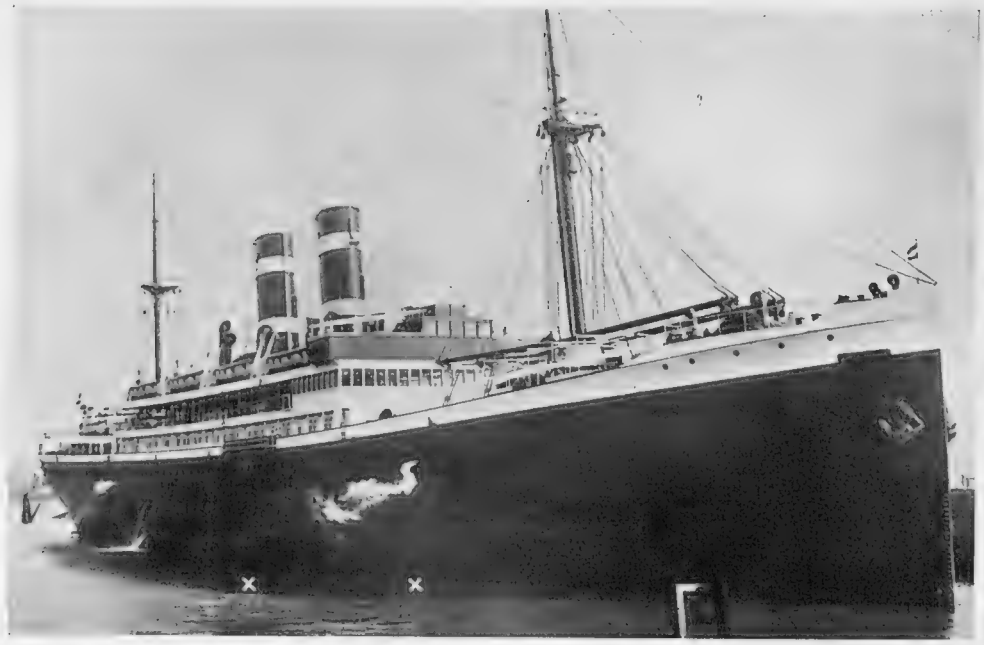
Think of the saving of transport vehicles and trains, railway transport staff, and so forth.

Even if it happened to be a mechanised division one could take a completely new personnel out and bring the old personnel home for a rest in a day, handing over the tanks and trucks and so forth to the new division when it came out. And think of the saving in life and pain in bringing hospital patients home that way, instead of jolting them in hospital trains and shaking them about in ships. They have been doing that in the back blocks of Australia for the past ten years.

A NEW PASTIME FOR THE SCOTS

Since the recent Nazi air raid on the Forth Bridge and the other aerial attacks on the east coast of Scotland, the citizens of Edinburgh have discovered a new attraction. The bridge is now the venue of hundreds of motorists who, whenever the weather looks propitious for an air raid, line the road to witness whatever "fun" is going to happen. Obviously the nerves of the Scots are very steady; and equally obviously they are not troubled by the thought of further raids

THE MINING OF THE DUTCH LINER "SIMON BOLIVAR"



THE MINED DUTCH LINER "SIMON BOLIVAR," 8,309 TONS, AS SHE APPEARED BEFORE THE DISASTER

On Saturday last the "Simon Bolivar," as she was proceeding to the West Indies from Amsterdam with some 400 passengers on board, struck mines when near the east coast of England. The first mine struck forward of the bridge; a little later a second mine struck her amidships (the positions are indicated by white crosses)

AN EAST COAST LIFEBOAT RETURNS AFTER STANDING-BY ALL NIGHT

A crowd of trawlers were on the scene of the disaster in about twenty minutes. Many passengers jumped into the sea when the boats could not be launched

SURVIVORS OF THE "SIMON BOLIVAR" GATHERING OUTSIDE THE LONDON HOTEL WHERE THEY WERE LOOKED AFTER BY MANY FRIENDLY PEOPLE

Of the 262 known survivors forty-eight are British; thirty-two British were among the missing and one among the dead. There were two unidentified bodies at Harwich

A LITTLE DUTCH GIRL BEING CARED FOR IN A LONDON HOSPITAL

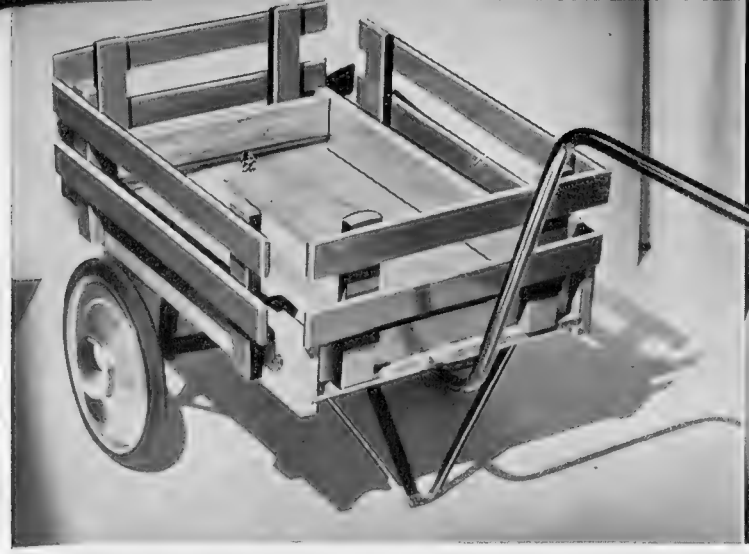
Christina Wensvoort is one of the surviving children from the "Simon Bolivar." There were many like her on board. One little boy lost both his father and mother in the disaster

TWO COLOURED CHILDREN WERE ON BOARD. THEY WERE RESCUED AND ARE NOW IN HOSPITAL

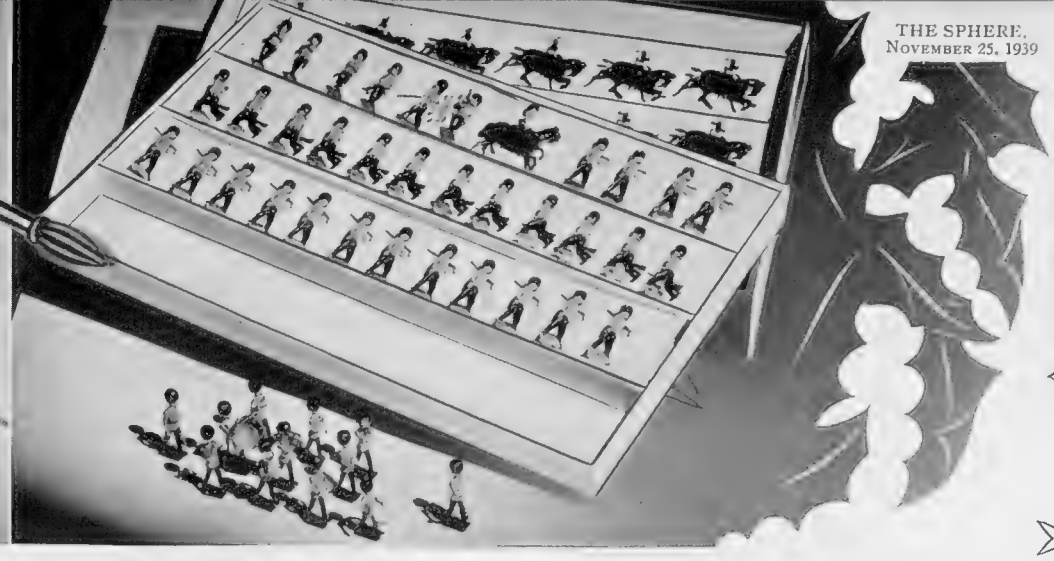
There was in addition a baby at Harwich which was at first thought to be coloured, but she was only thickly coated with oil. *Below*—Miss Howe (in fur coat), one of the rescued, in London

THE RESCUED MEMBERS OF THE "SIMON BOLIVAR" CREW

Mr. Vellman, Dutch ministry official in Curacao, says: "I clambered half-way up the bridge and saw that the captain's throat had been half-severed by a piece of flying glass. I believe that his chief officer was also dead. The mate was seriously wounded in the head. I hustled my wife and daughters into a lifeboat. When we were about 100 yards off, shortly after the first explosion, another mine blew up, right amidships. This explosion shattered three lifeboats still swinging on the davits."



CART YOU CAN PUSH OR PULL ALONG. The uprights are detachable so all sorts of things can be carried in it. Sorbo tyres. (Made in U.S.A.). TO 74 **59/6**



SOLDIER SET. English Regiments of Cavalry and infantry packed in a two-layer box. TO 76 . **22/6**

RUBBER TOY SETS. The latest idea in harmless, noiseless toys. This is a Racing Car Set in all rubber. Suitable for children from 3 to 6 years. (Made in U.S.A.). TO 72 **7/6**

HARRODS

Toy Fair—jolly as ever!

A magic world belonging to youth and laughter! Toys, the like of which you've never seen, are in colourful, exciting groups around the centrepiece—a scene showing a house as Santa Claus sees it, "At the top of the chimney." Wonderful dolls' clothes, motor cars, and the little "Soldier Shop" with all the new soldiers, searchlights, guns and army lorries. See the fascinating boxes of "things to make," quaint animals, the dolls, the trains. Let the children choose from this Wonderland the playthings that please them most.

INDOOR GAMES

In the Sports Department you'll find a variety of Indoor Games without equal in the land. Thrilling and exciting games to relieve the monotonous 'Black-out' hours—games for boys and girls—for grown-ups—and for all together. See them being played here and judge for yourselves.

(Second Floor)

Carriage paid on orders over £1 (Scotland £2)

MECCANO CAR OUTFIT (No. 2) for building really fine large cars. Two different colour schemes. A powerful Clockwork Motor giving a run of 150 ft. on one winding is included in the outfit. TO 71 **18/9**

COWBOY SET that is very true to life. There's a hat, a red tunic, brown fringed trousers, neckerchief, holster, belt, lanyard and lasso. To fit ages 4 to 10. (Please state age). TO 75 **17/6**

HANDMADE LEATHER HORSE is complete with detachable harness and nosebag. All the detail is perfect and it is handstitched. Height 12 ins. Others from 10/6 TO 70 **25/-**

PRETTY DOLL with soft cuddly body and composition head, arms and legs. Beautifully dressed. She cries and goes to sleep. (Made in U.S.A.). TO 73 **34/6**

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ENTERTAINING THE TROOPS

FRANCES DAY IN MANCHESTER The famous revue artiste and Billy Bennett during their show in the North. These two stars are appearing at the Manchester Palace and are giving much of their spare time to the entertainment of the Forces

THE STATION STAFF ENTERTAIN THE TROOPS At Waterloo Station, the staff give a concert for the benefit of the troops in the Y.M.C.A. canteen

FAMOUS RADIO STARS WITH THE R.A.F. A terrific reception was accorded these well-known entertainers when they gave a free show to members of the R.A.F. From left to right are: Stainless Stephen, Eve Beck, Eddie Pola, Renee Houston, Donald Stuart, Shirley Houston, and Frank Baron

THE MILL GIRL ENTERTAINER IS A BOBBIN FASTENER DURING THE DAY Miss Hollingworth is one of the concert party at the Greenfield Mill, Oldham, where they entertain the troops

YOUNG BALLET DANCERS' BIG VENTURE Eleven young ballet dancers, five men and six women, have just re-opened the Lyric Theatre at Hammersmith—traditional house of brave ventures—with their own money, on a co-operative basis. Under the name "Les Ballets Trois Arts" they are presenting a repertoire of new ballets. All the members of the company have danced with the principal ballet companies, but with war conditions threatening their careers they have banded themselves together to keep going. From left to right above are seen: Alexis Rassine (Ballets Russe de Monte Carlo), Anna Lendrum, Jack Spurgeon (Polish State Ballet), Lisa Brionda (premiere danseuse), Leo Kersley and Celia Franca (both of former London ballet companies)

PHILIP PAGE ON THE THEATRE

The Latest London Theatrical Ventures Reviewed

LET it be granted that brightness, brightness all the way, with nothing to relieve it, would form a rather grim revue. Let us admit the reasonableness of the demand for the inclusion in a show, admittedly out to amuse, of certain items of sentimental interest by way of contrast. I do not even suggest that a revue in which the more emotional members of the audience might be able to enjoy a good cry is necessarily doomed to failure.

But what America has taught us to call "the blues" should, I think, be strictly rationed, together with all that is macabre. "Black Velvet" (the title itself is a little gloomy and sinister) at the Hippodrome has a vast amount in it that is bright and amusing (of which more anon) and, taking it on the whole, it is a show that should cheer up plenty of people for plenty of months to come. But there is also more than a shade too much of dancing on a darkened stage to sad strains, of singing of the croonerish and depressing type.

Mr. Cole Porter contributes one pointed and unsentimental number, "My Heart belongs to Daddy," which is the rage of New York and in his best style; but the four glamorous young ladies to whom it was entrusted did not seem to me to understand it, or, if they did, they failed to put it over to the audience, who, in turn, failed to show by any outward signs that they appreciated it. The same composer's "Get out of Town" was so dismal a ditty that it almost induced me to get out of the theatre into the enlivening black-out of Charing Cross Road.

Miss Pat Kirkwood, who should remember that although this show is labelled "intimate" this theatre is a large one, did not grapple with it to any successful extent. Another episode—females flitting about in twilight draped in blue veils—had as its sole virtue a final revelation of nudity of the Paris or New York's 42nd Street variety, but strictly rationed.

Black Velvet is even in its present form a good entertainment. Cut down these doses of the dismals and cut out altogether impersonations of Hitler and that damsilly song about "Washing on the Siegfried Line" (is it too much to hope that one day we shall have a revue without any war-time references or burlesques?) and it would be at least twice as good again.

The company is a strong one. One misses a definite personality such as Miss Frances Day proved herself to be at this theatre. Her work now devolves on a galaxy of stars of lesser magnitude, some of whom twinkle prettily enough while others show but the faint glimmer of a heavenly body infinitely distant. This lack of female strength, as it were, was noticeable particularly in a delightful episode which showed the Café Royal of 1900, with music-hall stars of the period in attendance.

I do not think Miss Vesta Tilley and Miss Vesta Victoria ever did their stuff at the Café Royal and the ladies who impersonated them hardly suggested that they would have been allowed to do it anywhere. Yet when Miss Alice Lloyd (in person) appeared in their midst it was, in effect, a giant singing among pigmies. For Miss Lloyd not only knows the period, she knows her job. In this scene, by the way, Mr. Cyril Smith, with excellent work throughout, gave a brilliant sketch of Gus Elen.

Mr. Vic Oliver worked hard, was consistently funny, and never wore his welcome. Funny, too, were Messrs. Max and Harry Nesbitt. The Conga Dancers were as lithe and slim as conga eels. The polka in the stalls with ladies of the chorus as partners (even dramatic critics unbent at the first performance) was great fun.

Opera at Sadler's Wells.—Opera at the Wells continues to be enthusiastically supported—so enthusiastically, indeed, that one wonders whether a short season at Covent Garden, launched and managed with caution, would not be successful. I have seen within the last fortnight a good performance of *La Bohème* and an even better one of *Carmen*. The Carmen of Miss Edith Coates was full of fire—she is an excellent actress, has personal magnetism, and her voice is of the right quality. Mr. Lawrence Collingwood is a sympathetic conductor and did admirably with a necessarily reduced orchestra.

These two performances were a welcome contrast to the somewhat poor attempt at *Madame Butterfly* of which I had some hardish things to say in these columns. These I do not retract. But I willingly make the *amende* in the matter of one of them—the employment of a doll for Butterfly's child when the streets of Clerkenwell are swarming with kiddies (very much alive). It has been pointed out to me by the management that you can't just go into the street and pick on a child to appear on the stage, and, in any case, at the moment the L.C.C. are not granting any licences for performing children owing to the evacuation business.

Indian Dances.—Mr. Ram Gopal and his Hindu dancers, who were at the Aldwych Theatre early in the year, last week returned for a season at the Vaudeville. About the most graceful male I have ever seen is Mr. Gopal, and his colleague, Mr. Sohan Lal, runs him close in this respect. The haunting strangeness of the music made the war seem a long way away.

RAM GOPAL Leader of the company of Hindu dancers who have just opened for a three weeks' special season at the Vaudeville Theatre

Schweppes, sir,
of course

SPANNING LOCH LONG A view of the new road bridge which is being built over the neck of Loch Long at Dornie Ferry. It has been in course of construction for some three years and is expected to be completed early in 1940

IS PETROL RATIONING NEEDED?

The Present Restrictions are Doing Great Harm to the Motor Trade

By A. PERCY BRADLEY, M.I.A.E., A.M.I.Mech.E. (*Clerk of the Course; Brooklands*)

IT seems very doubtful if the present severe restrictions on petrol will be ameliorated for some time. The new ration books which are now available cover a period from November 23 to January 31 next. The fact that the period of validity terminates at the end of a calendar month is the first sign of sanity which the Ministry of Mines has shown since the wretched scheme started.

Apparently the number of units allotted to cars in their various horse-power groups has not been changed, but there is at least one inconsistency which I have noted. Owing to the fact that the period covered by these new books is two months and one week, the number of units granted is slightly more than previously so as to make provision for the additional seven days. I note that cars up to 7 h.p. receive one additional unit for this period, which is one-quarter of their monthly allowance, but the cars in the 10 to 12 h.p. division receive two extra units, which is one-third of their monthly allotment. The authorities, of course, could alleviate the position by declaring at any moment that from a given date a unit would represent two, three or more gallons, instead of one as is the case at the moment.

Motorists hear from many different sources that petrol rationing at the present moment is totally unnecessary and that it was only instituted in the first instance to ascertain some desirable facts regarding the consumption of petrol. Now that these facts are known to the authorities there is no real reason for the scheme to continue. Doubtless a large army of officials have dug themselves in and it will take quite an appreciable effort on the part of the motor trade and the motoring community to shift them. It can be done, however, and if any example of success in this direction would help any campaign which was started, we have only to remember that very determined efforts were made to ration coal, gas and electricity but at the last moment bureaucracy was defeated.

Without being in any way an expert in international finance it does appear to me to be highly desirable that this country should not only preserve whatever export trade it had before the war but increase it, provided, of course, that the momentum of the military machine is not in consequence slowed down. The present restrictions on motoring must, of necessity, have a bad effect on the whole motoring trade, including manufacturers. Their home sales enable them to sell cars abroad at prices which they could not hope to continue if their output in this country is seriously affected and it is extremely doubtful if they can keep up their exports if their prices have to be increased. In addition, it looks as if over half of the garages and petrol filling stations in this country will have to close down before very long. A large army of employees will be without work and the finances of the country must, thereby, be affected. This would all be highly lamentable if petrol rationing was necessary, but as it is not, the effect on the country will be unwarranted and unforgivable.

The earliest opportunity should be taken to press in Parliament for an immediate revision of the petrol restrictions. In addition there are many other matters affecting the motoring community which should have instant and serious consideration. On January 1, as the law stands at present, we shall all be called upon to pay 25s. per horse power for the licence for our cars. The Chancellor of the Exchequer must surely see that even if petrol restrictions were removed or varied in the right direction many owners hold the opinion that as motoring during the hours of darkness is so unpleasant it will scarcely be worth their while to pay the increased taxation on their cars on January 1. With the present restrictions on petrol still in force the revenue from motor car taxation will be reduced to an alarming degree. As it is revenue which is easily collected it seems extraordinary that the Exchequer does not move heaven and earth to keep it at the highest possible level.

Up to the moment we have been fairly lucky this winter in not experiencing very foggy conditions. I realise, of course, that because I state this it is more than likely that there will be a complete daylight black-out before these words appear in print. Anyway, I think that driving in fog will now be easier than previously. We have got to remember that the authorities have let it be known that fog lamps may be used when conditions of fog prevail.

The white line which is now painted down the centre of practically every road is an advantage which we have not possessed before. Our much-dimmed side-lamps will prevent us from being dazzled by their glare and we shall not find so many cars on the road to worry us either by their oncoming lights or in having to overtake them. It, therefore, definitely looks as if this dreaded enemy of the winter motorist will not be able to make things so difficult as in former times. Then, too, it must be remembered that driving in what is now the usual black-out approximates very closely to fog driving, and so when the fog does descend we shall have had more experience in groping our way along roads which we cannot clearly discern.

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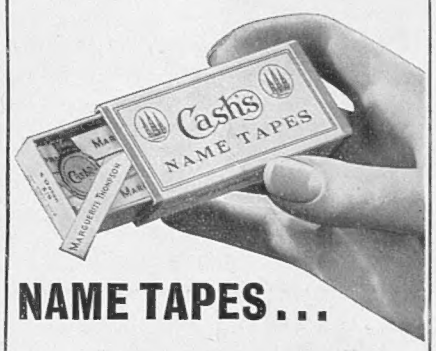

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WITH petrol at 1s. 9½d. a gallon and rationed at that, with daylight saving for 1939 expired after an extended span of life, many a motor-car will be shrouded in dust-sheets for the duration. Consequently our final choice of an hotel will in future be largely influenced by the ability of the railways to convey us to or near our destination.

I stress that word "near" because in fairness to many a country-house hotel, which may now seem cut off from civilisation, there are few, if any, which are not still get-at-able, seeing that every hotel has its transport which now more than ever is employed in useful ferrying work to and from stations.

One great advantage of this old era revived is that hotel proprietors will now know, as they never did in the days of motoring, what time their visitors will arrive. Thus will be eliminated those often unjust complaints about inferior meals and cold bedrooms, many of which could be traced to tired motorists arriving at ungodly hours.

This war-time method of transport may also have the effect of improving our knowledge of the geography of our own country. We shall learn that certain places are strategic railheads, for example, Exeter. Here, within a radius of 20 miles, are a galaxy of first-rate country hotels. And what could be pleasanter than a forty-minute motor run along country roads after a hot and tiring train journey, even at the best of times? Of course, the really sensible traveller will break his journey at Exeter, spend the night at the very comfortable Royal Clarence in the Cathedral Close, and arrange to complete his journey the next day after having leisurely done the Cathedral, the Guildhall, and the other historic sights of that fine, old, west country town.

We shall also become acquainted with stations we have never heard of before. How many people know Semley? I only learnt of it the other week, when at Coombe House Hotel, Shaftesbury, I learnt Semley is the station for that Dorset town.

You catch, say, the 10.35 a.m. train from Waterloo, reach Salisbury at 12.23 p.m. and there changing, get to Semley at 1.11 p.m., in time for lunch at 1.30 p.m. at Coombe House Hotel. And if the journey took double the time Coombe House Hotel would still be worth travelling to!

Another teaser is Martin Mill. Not a clue does this name give to its county or locality. Well, it's in Kent, and it's the nearest railhead to St. Margaret's Bay, that delightfully sheltered coastal retreat next to Dover. If you have never been there note it down for a week or longer. Here all the sunshine in Kent seems to have congregated, and the Granville you will find an unusually comfortable hotel, so perched on the cliff face that it commands a marvellous

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Good Hotels

By ASHLEY COURTENAY

Luxury : Hotels within the Railways

grand-stand view of the Channel. The 3.15 p.m. from Charing Cross with Pullman facilities gets there at 5.40 p.m., so in just under two and a half hours you can be in heaven.

Reverting to Exeter, I feel pretty certain that should you be thinking in terms of a country house hotel at the foot of Dartmoor for a few days, the proprietors of Easton Court Hotel, Chagford, would most certainly suggest picking you up at Exeter. Here is another heaven-made spot. Tranquil, brimful of character, and so deliciously replete in modern comforts. I cannot visualise a gas-mask or a sandbag within miles of Easton Court. Whilst as to black-outs it is a perfectly normal proceeding there to shutter the windows in winter and settle down to eat, read, talk—and so to bed.

One more example, and I think I can claim to have proved my point. Have you ever heard of Churston Ferrers? It's as nice as it sounds. Take yourself then to Paddington. Catch the 10.30 a.m. West Country Express, and you will reach Churston at 3.35 p.m., through train (only twenty minutes longer than Torquay). Here a car from Lupton Hotel Country House will pick you up. Half a mile away are the lodge gates (incidentally the Churston Golf Links adjoin the estate), and down a 600 yards drive you will come to Lupton itself, a house which is as satisfying as it looks solid. But don't be alarmed at the outward and visible signs of grandeur. Inside is gladness after a long train journey. Warm fires, warmth of welcome, a warm bedroom, and, by no means least, heaps of bathrooms and hot water. As to the way the place is run, it must be good, for of the dozen people I met when I was last there eight of them had stayed there several times before.

Churston is a good place to note for a country-house Christmas holiday. Thirty-six people is the maximum it can hold, so fore-warned is fore-armed.

ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENT

F. P., Hammersmith, W.6.—I sympathise with you about this black-out business, and I can certainly help you in your search. I think I can sense what is at the back at your mind, and here are one or two places I can vouch for.

Whitefriars Hotel, near Herstmonceux, Sussex. This is just the sort of place you are looking for, and I am quite certain you will be charmed with it if you can get in. Alternatively, there is the Montague Arms Hotel, Beaulieu, New Forest, or Burley Manor Hotel, which is also in the New Forest.

Mr. Ashley Courtenay is always pleased to advise "Sphere" readers of hotels, both large and small, known to him personally. Letters should be addressed to him, c/o the Editor, THE SPHERE, *32-34, St. Bride Street, London, E.C.4. Personal and telephone inquiries, however, cannot be accepted.*

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Telegrams: Stafford Hotel, London Managing Director

THE SPHERE REGISTER OF HOTELS

The majority of these hotels are personally known to our Hotel Correspondent, Mr. Ashley Courtenay, who will be pleased to give further details regarding them to readers who write to him, c/o "The Sphere."

ENGLAND

Aldeburgh.—Wentworth Hotel. Tel. 312 & 313.
Ashburton (S. Devon).—Holne Park Hotel.
Bath.—Lansdown Grove Hotel.
Bexhill-on-Sea.—Hotel Riposo. Tel. 472.
Blackpool.—The Headlands. A.A. and R.A.C.
Bognor Regis.—Royal Norfolk Hotel. Tel. 40.
Boscastle.—Wellтown Manor Guest Hse. Tel. 17
Bournemouth.—Bourne Hall Hotel. Tel. 5.
Bournemouth.—Canford Cliffs Hotel.
Bournemouth.—Hinton Firs Hotel.
Bournemouth.—Priory Hotel.
Bournemouth.—Tollard Royal.
Brighton.—The Kings Hotel.
Budleigh Salterton.—Rosemullion Hotel.
Burley (New Forest).—Burley Manor Hotel.
Bushey.—Bushey Hall Hotel.
Cambridge.—Blue Boar Hotel. Tel. 3030.
Chagford (Devon).—Easton Court.
Chipping Campden.—Cotswold Hse. Htl. Tel.330
Crowborough (Sussex).—Beacon Hotel.
Crowborough (Sussex).—The Crest Hotel.
Droitwich.—Raven Hotel.
Dulverton.—Carnarvon Arms.
Dulverton (Som.).—Woodcote Hotel. Tel. 129.
Exeter.—Royal Clarence Hotel.
Exmouth.—Maer Bay Hotel.
Goring-on-Thames.—The Bull. Tel. Goring 57.
Hailsham (Sussex).—Woodside Hotel.
Hove.—Dudley Hotel. Completely modernised.
Leatherhead.—The Red House Hotel.
Looe.—Boscarn Hotel.
Lytham St. Annes.—Clifton Arms Hotel.
Lyme Regis—Hotel Alexandra. Tel. 10.
Mundesley-on-Sea (Norfolk).—Manor Hse. Htl.
Newquay.—Headland Hotel. Tel. Newquay 2211.
Newton Ferrers (S. Devon).—Sheiling Gst. Hse.
Ninfield (nr. Battle).—Moor Hall Hotel. Tel. 30
Ockham.—The Hautboy. Ripley 20.
Oxford.—Mitre Hotel. Tel. 2335 and 3840.
Paignton.—Ravenswood. Cliff Road.
Penzance (Cornwall).—Queen's Hotel.
St. Leonard's-on-Sea.—Royal Victoria Hotel.
St. Margaret's Bay (Kent).—The Granville Htl.
Salisbury.—Old George Hotel. Tel. 3189.
Sanderstead (Surrey).—Selsdon Park Hotel.
Scarborough.—The Grand. 'Phone: 1053.
Shaftesbury (Dorset).—Coombe House Hotel.

ENGLAND—*continued*

Sidmouth.—Fortfield Hotel.
Sidmouth.—Victoria Hotel.
Sidmouth.—The Torbay Hotel.
Sidmouth.—The Royal Glen Hotel. Phone 221
Tintern.—Beaufort Hotel.
Torquay.—Lincombe Hall. Tel. 2302.
Torquay.—Park Hall Hotel.
Torquay.—Roslin Hall Hotel. Tel. 4373 (2 lines)
Treyarnon Bay (Cornwall).—Waterbeach Hotel.
Tunbridge Wells.—The Spa Hotel.
Twyford (Berks.).—Grove Hall Hotel. Tel. 109.
Washington (Sussex).—Clematis Cottage Hotel.
Weymouth.—Royal Hotel. Tels. 627 & 628.

GREAT NORTH ROAD

(Figures in brackets show mileage from London)

Catterick (229).—Bridge House Hotel.
Sutton-on-Trent (133½).—Old England Hotel.

ENGLISH LAKES

Keswick.—Queen's Hotel.
Keswick.—Borrowdale Hotel. Borrowdale 24.
Keswick.—Royal Oak Hotel.

LONDON

Ambassadors Hotel, W.C. 1. Tel. Euston 1456.
Bailey's Hotel, Gloucester Road, S.W. 7.
S. Kensington Htl., Queen's Gate Terrace, S.W.7
Stafford Hotel, St. James's Place, S.W.1
United Services Hotel, S.W. 7. Tel. Wes. 7131.

SCOTLAND

Tomintoul (Banffshire).—Richmond Arms Htl.

WALES

Llandudno.—Imperial Hotel. Facing sea.
Llangollen.—The Hand Hotel.
Tan-y-bwlch.—Oakeley Arms Hotel.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Belfast.—Grand Central Hotel.
Rostrevor.—Great Northern Railway Hotel.

EIRE

Dun Laoghaire (Kingstown).—Ross's Hotel.
Glendalough (Co. Wicklow).—Royal Hotel.
Greenore.—Great Northern Railway Hotel.
Greystones (Co. Wicklow).—Grand Hotel.
Kingstown (Co. Dublin).—Royal Marine Hotel.

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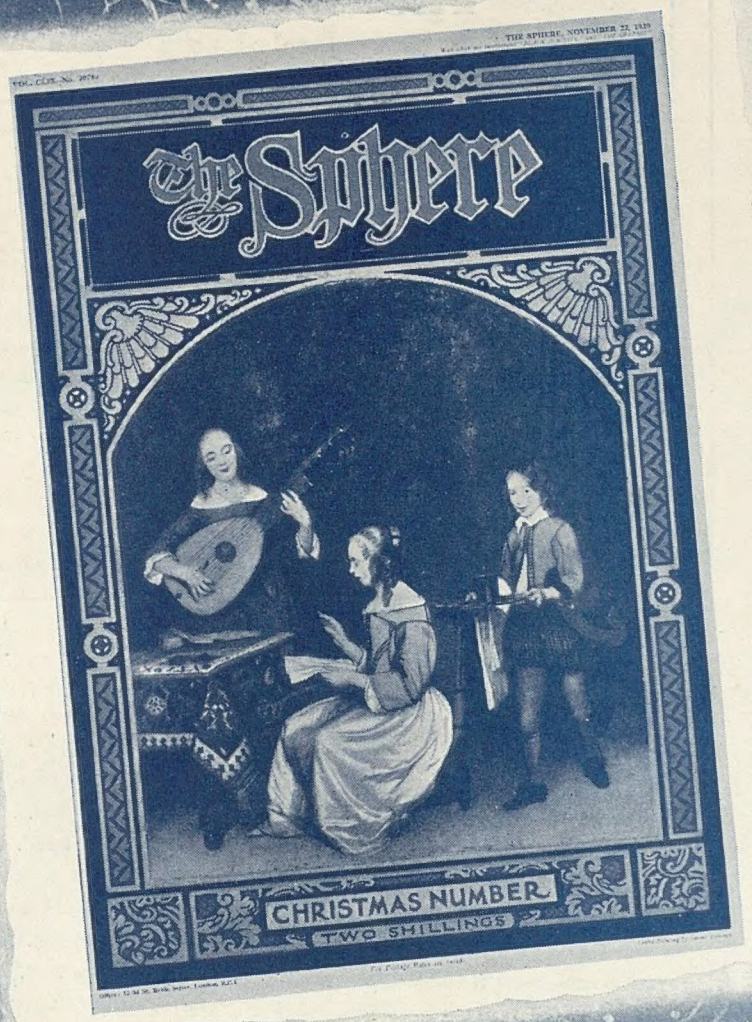

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